



















# THE HAND OF DESTINY.

⇒ · BY OSSIP SCHUBIN · ⇐

Translated By

MARY A. ROBINSON.

· NEW YORK ·

Worthington & Co. 747 Broadway.

Issued monthly. Subscription, \$3.00. June, 1892.

Entered at New York Post Office as second-class matter.















Kirschner, Lula.  
"

THE

# HAND OF DESTINY

BY

OSSIP SCHUBIN, *pseud.*

TRANSLATED BY MARY A. ROBINSON

"Life is a comedy to those who think,  
A tragedy to those who feel."

HORACE WALPOLE.

NEW YORK

WORTHINGTON CO., 747 BROADWAY

1892





copy 2

48 65 55  
AUG 27 1942

9  
 6  
 7  
 8  
 5  
 4  
 3  
 2  
 1



# THE HAND OF DESTINY.

---

## PART I.—CARNIVAL.

---

### CHAPTER I.

IT was in Rome, in 187—. Roman society had already separated into the *monde noir* and the *monde blanc*, and had not yet shown the slightest inclination to unite in a *monde gris*.

His holiness the Pope had barricaded himself behind his *prestige* of a martyr, and the King had commenced to hold his court at the Quirinal.

Among the most prominent of the Austrians who were spending the winter in Rome were the Otto Ilsenberghs. Count Otto Ilsenbergh, one of the heads of the feudal party in Austria, had come to Rome nominally for his health, but in reality merely for the purpose of consulting the sources offered by the Vatican Library with regard to the "History of Miracles," which he has since published under some curious pseudonym.

He, with his wife and a whole flock of red-haired young Ilsenberghs of all sizes and ages, lived in



the Corso, in the Palazzo —, a rambling historical building, with cold, stone staircases, and lofty, hall-like apartments, which seemed more appropriate for meetings of conspirators than for innocent routs and dancing-parties.

The countess always received in the evening, when she had nothing more amusing to take her out. She was by birth a Princess Auerstein, of the Auerstein-Zolling branch, the women of which, as is well known, are all distinguished for their white eyebrows and their strict morals.

People liked to go to the Ilsenberghs; there was no stiffness about their receptions. Smoking was allowed in their parlors; the countess even smoked herself, generally regalias.

It was the beginning of December. Heavy drops of rain were beating against the windows outside. In an uncomfortably large apartment, decorated with frescoes, Count Ilsenbergh sat at a small *buhl* table, which was evidently constructed merely for the inditing of love-letters, scribbling away at an article for *Our Times*. This was the title of a journal of feudal tendencies, which was patronized by the count, subscribed for from feudal ostentation by his friends of the aristocracy, but absolutely read by no one except liberal journalists, when they were hunting for reactionary absurdities.

Count Ilsenbergh was much depressed. Austrian statesmanship had once more crowned its previous remarkable achievements by one still more remarkable—it had, for the fourth time in three years,



announced a "new era," and, setting aside all prejudices, had thrown together at haphazard an exquisitely liberal ministry, which possibly was destined to firmly establish the welfare of the peoples of Austria, but certainly would enrich the drawing-rooms of the Ringstrasse by half a dozen Excellencies.

Count Ilsenbergh prophesied the end of the world.

The countess was reclining in an easy-chair beside a *renaissance* fireplace, framed in by marble chimeras. Handsomely bound editions of "Mommсен" and "Ampère" were lying about on the tables in the room; she held in her hand a shabby novel from a circulating library. She was a large, florid blonde, with a heavy figure, though small hands and feet; her features were insignificant. She spoke German and French with a strong Viennese accent, was awkward in her movements, and behind the fashion in her dress; and yet no one could fail to recognize in her the lady, the aristocrat. An imposing accessory at all court festivities, she never stumbled over her train, and knew how to bear the burden of her family jewels with stately indifference.

The portière was thrown back. "General Von Klinger," was announced.

General Von Klinger was an old Austrian who had, indeed, been so fortunate as to distinguish himself, with his cavalry regiment, at Sadowa, in 1866; but then, furious at "the national blunder" of which Austria had been guilty, had bidden



adieu to a military career, and, with the title of general conferred upon him on his resignation, had devoted himself entirely to painting. In his regiment he had been considered quite a genius, and had won considerable reputation by his faculty of jotting down galloping horses ridden by stooping jockeys, with his gold pencil, on the back of old letters or visiting-cards. That which excited the greatest admiration in these works of art was the stupendous rapidity of their execution. Since then he had "studied art" in Paris, had been three times rejected by the jury of the "*Salon*," and had made up his mind to consider this a distinction—thanks to the brilliant example of Rousseau, Delacroix, and many other martyrs who had been obliged to submit to the same thing. As a misunderstood genius he had left Paris for Rome, where he established himself as a painter in a splendid studio on the Piazza Navona. This studio was open to the public daily from three to five, and was a favorite place of rendezvous for Roman society.

People smiled at the old soldier's art, without finding *him* ridiculous. He was a man of honor and a gentleman. Like many old bachelors, whose single state is the result of a youthful disappointment in love, he was gruff and sarcastic on a sentimental background—in short, a pessimistic idealist. A handsome, erect old officer, with a stiff shirt-collar and romantic eyes, he rejoiced in the special favor of all the great ladies of Rome.

"It was very good of you to think of us," said the



countess in a tone of cordial welcome, adding: "Shocking weather, is it not? Try to warm yourself a little."

Count Ilsenbergh turned to him from his writing-table, and said: "How are you, general? An old friend like you will excuse me if I go on with my work—just a few lines more—three words. These are serious times, in which each one of us must fight valiantly at his own post!" and this outguard of the feudal cause dipped his pen dejectedly into the inkstand.

The general begged him not to disturb himself. The countess said a few words about some musical soirée; the count, shortly after, made a flourish under his completed article, saying triumphantly, "That will give them a nut to crack!" and joined the other two at the fireplace.

The rolling of a carriage was heard in the court.

"That may be Truyn; he arrived yesterday," remarked the countess, and, in fact, Count Truyn was announced.

Eric Truyn, at the time of which we are speaking, was a man in the thirties, with prematurely gray hair and an expression of indifference in his half-closed eyes. He was called "Truyn the *frappé*," because he always gave the impression of having been cooled in the ice of the highest distinction. His rigid exterior had won for him the reputation of being intensely proud, and belied his inner man.

He was possessed of uncommonly good and



noble qualities, and that which was looked upon as pride in him was, in reality, only the diffidence of a highly sensitive nature, which, having possibly on some occasion drawn ridicule upon itself by idealistic extravagances, was now anxious to conceal the inner shrine of its feelings from the derision of the world.

"Ah, Truyn, here you are at last! How are you?" cried the countess with her hearty cordiality.

"As usual, thank you," said Truyn, in answer to her question about his health.

"How is your wife?" asked Ilsenbergh.

"I don't know."

"Is she still in Nice?"

"I don't know;" and with these words his face assumed a peculiarly cold and rigid expression.

"Shall you stay in Rome long?" the countess inquired, her innate tact prompting her to turn the conversation to a more satisfactory subject.

"As long as my little comrade likes it, and it agrees with her," was Truyn's answer. He called his only child, a daughter of about twelve, his "little comrade."

"You must bring Gabrielle to see us some day," remarked the countess; "my Mimi and my Lintchi are just about her age."

"I will present her to you in a day or two; but unfortunately she is very bashful. She is shy of every stranger; only the general there, and our cousin Sempaly, have succeeded in winning her heart."

"Nicki?" exclaimed the countess in astonish-



ment. "Has he the patience to get along with children?"

"Not only that, but he has a peculiar talent for it. He dined with us to-day."

"You never know what to expect of him," complained the countess; "he hardly ever comes to see us."

At that moment a light step was heard outside, and Count Sempaly was announced.

"*Lupus in fabula*," remarked Ilsenbergh.

The new-comer was a man of about twenty-eight or nine, of medium height, slender, but strongly built, had regular, uncommonly fine-cut features, with a dark complexion, an insinuating smile, and large blue eyes under broad, brownish lids. With that same insinuating smile he could make the most audaciously malicious speeches, and it was never easy to decide whether the sparkle in his eye meant a flash of lightning or a sunbeam.

With perfunctory gallantry he kissed the tips of the countess' fingers; greeted the others with a brusque cordiality peculiar to him, and finally took a seat beside the lady of the house.

"You do well to show yourself once more; we really see too little of you, Nicki; and you are hardly ever to be met with elsewhere, either," observed the countess, in a tone of affectionate remonstrance. "Why do you mingle so little in respectable society?"

"Because he finds another kind more entertaining," chuckled Ilsenbergh in a low tone.



A severe look from his wife, however, immediately induced him to assume an air of dignity.

"I don't get a chance," said Sempaly in excuse; "I have really too much to do."

"Too much to do?" asked Truyn, with his quiet sarcasm. "With politics, eh? What is there new?"

"A remarkable leader in the *Temps*, on the wash-basin question," replied Sempaly, with perfidious gravity.

"The wash-basin question?" repeated the whole company in unanimous amazement.

"Yes," continued Sempaly placidly; "the matter is this. When, recently, the young Duke of B——n, in Paris, entered upon his year of military service, he was painfully struck by the fact that he was not only expected to live in barracks with his comrades, but also to wash at the pump, like a common soldier. This exasperated his mamma to such a degree that she applied to the war department, with the request that her son might be furnished with a separate wash-basin. After a long consultation the department denied her request. It had been found that that separate wash-basin would not be in accordance with the immortal principles of '89."

"That is hardly credible," observed Truyn; Ilsenberg shrugged his shoulders, and the countess asked naïvely:

"What are the immortal principles of '89?"

"They were a species of idealistic treaties of peace between the *canaille* and the aristocracy," said



Sempaly coolly; "or, if you prefer it, they were the first capitulations of prejudice at the feet of humanity," he added, humorously.

The countess was no wiser than before. Sempaly, smiling maliciously, fanned himself with a Japanese hand-screen, and Ilsenbergh remarked:

"Ah, you are a democrat, Sempaly?"

"From a bird's-eye point of view," observed Truyn dryly. His cousin's liberalism inspired him with little confidence.

"I am always a democrat when I have been reading 'The Middle Ages,'" said Sempaly. "The Middle Ages" was the name he gave his cousin's reactionary journal. "However, joking aside, I am liberal; but notwithstanding, I find the increasing ascendancy of the radicals somewhat alarming. *Tiens*, I had forgotten to tell you something that will please you, Fritzi! The Reds have carried off the victory in Paris, and in Madrid some one has tried to shoot the king."

"Horrible!" the countess shuddered. "We shall have a second *Commune*!"

"'93," said Truyn, with his quiet sarcasm.

"We really ought to have a cordon drawn around the Austrian monarchy in order to prevent the spreading of the democratic plague which is raging there," Sempaly remarked gravely. "Ilsenbergh, you ought to make a motion to that effect in Parliament."

"This is no subject for bad jokes," said the countess; "the matter is growing serious."



"Not with us," remarked Truyn; "our people are entirely too patient."

"They are healthy at the core," Ilsenbergh interrupted him warmly.

"They do not fully appreciate liberty yet," said Sempaly, smiling; "and, as for equality, they regard it in the light of metaphysics—as something entirely beyond their grasp."

"Our people are good and loyal," replied Ilsenbergh; "they know——"

"Oh," interrupted Sempaly laughing—"luckily for you, they know very little; let them once open their spiritual eyes, and you may be in fear of your lives. If I were a journeyman mason, I should be a democrat—a socialist, too."

After this brilliant culmination Sempaly crossed his arms over his breast, and looked about him as if challenging a reply.

"A socialist, you?" cried Ilsenbergh, greatly excited. "No, Nicki, that you could never be. There is one thing that would always guard you from such wickedness, and that is your religion!"

"Hm!" muttered Sempaly dubiously.

Truyn, however, remarked, with a peculiar pucker of his lips: "Possibly, as a journeyman mason, Sempaly would not have had much religion. He might have found it hard to believe in a God who had treated him so shabbily."

"Be quiet, Truyn," Sempaly rebuked his cousin rather nervously; "you know I never like to hear religion talked about."



"Ah, true! You wear Catholic blinders, and are constantly in fear about your religion. You would find it very unpleasant not to be able to hope for a good, unlimited prolongation of your comfortable little existence," said Truyn demurely, in a sarcastic tone, which sounded rather weary.

For Sempaly had, in fact, no religion at all; but, like all people who are getting along too well in the world, he clung firmly to the belief in immortality. It was on this account that he wore "Catholic blinders," and nothing in the world would have induced him to turn over the leaves of a volume of David Strauss.

"We seem to be in great danger," sighed the countess, still absorbed in her gloomy fancies. "This new ministry!" she shook her head.

"Will not amount to much," said Sempaly, "except a few tedious leaders in the newspapers, and a great surplus of new laws, of which the government will not take the slightest notice."

"The Austrian *canaille* are beginning to show their teeth too," lamented the distressed countess.

"Pah! the Austrian *canaille* are, on the whole, good fellows; they won't bite you as long as you don't object to their licking your hands."

"I should dislike the one as much as the other," replied the countess, looking down at her delicate white hands with affectionate pride.

"Tell me, Nicki," said Ilsenbergh, joining in the conversation, "has not the new ministry stood in the way of your promotion?"



Sempaly, it must be observed, was an *attaché* of the Roman branch of the Austrian factory of political complications—*i. e.*, the Austrian legation at Rome.

“Of course; I had hoped to be promoted to London as secretary. But now one of our secretaries is to go there, and to fill his place the democrats are going to send us one of their *protégés*. Our chief told me of it to-day.”

“Who is the new secretary?” cried the countess hastily; “if he is a *protégé* of *those* people, he must be a horrible creature!”

“A man named Stertzl. He is very highly recommended, and comes here from Teheran, where he is said to have distinguished himself,” said Sempaly.

“Stertzl!” repeated Ilsenbergh sarcastically.

“Stertzl!” cried his wife, horrified; “I hope he is not married—that would be the worst of all!”

“I can set your mind at rest on that subject, countess,” remarked the general. “Stertzl is a bachelor.”

“Does he—is he perhaps an acquaintance of yours?” she murmured, somewhat embarrassed.

“He is the son of one of my dearest comrades,” was the general’s reply; “and if his development has fulfilled the promise held out by his capacities, he must be a young man of energy and character, and possessed of remarkable ability.”

“That is always worth something,” lisped Ilsenbergh in a tone of condescension.

“Yes, so it seems to me,” observed Sempaly,



scratching his head; "we ought to have at least *one* worker at the embassy."

"They had promised me the position for my nephew," remarked the countess dejectedly; "it is very unpleasant!"

"Very!" said Sempaly with humor. "Such a foreign element is disturbing, after all, isn't it? We had rather be entirely *entre nous*."

At that moment tea was brought in on a Japanese *étagère*; and the secretary who was a commoner was forgotten for the present.



## CHAPTER II.

SEMPALY not only played the democrat in order to vex his cousin, but he was quite serious in thinking himself very liberal, because he made bad jokes about the conservatives, and looked upon the nobility as a venerable structure, which, as he declared, was about as well adapted to the spirit of the times as the Pyramids, only considerably less durable. But in spite of his theoretical respect for the rights of humanity, in spite of his witty contempt for the reactionary party, Sempaly was less tolerant than his mediævally constituted cousin. Ilsenbergh, with all his feudal mysticism, was nothing but an official aristocrat; Sempaly was an instinctive one. Ilsenbergh's sense of rank was a matter of party and of pride, while with Sempaly it was a matter of the nerves.

A few days after the lively discussion at the Ilsenberghs, Sempaly met the general, told him that the new secretary had arrived, and added, with a smile: "I hardly think he can keep his position."

"Why?" asked the general.

"Because he speaks bad French and knows nothing about old porcelain," answered Sempaly with great gravity. Then he continued: "Yesterday I introduced him to Countess Gandry. He had



hardly left us, when she asked (hm! she is the daughter of a leather-dealer in Lille), 'Is he noble?' and only think—I could not give her any information on the subject! I never can remember

'What commoners are Baron called,  
What Jew hath Christian turned?'

And then he added, with an indescribable smile: "His Christian name is Cecil Maria! \* 'Cecil Maria Stertzl' sounds well, doesn't it?"

Cecil Maria! The name seemed ridiculous, and was not in the least suited to its bearer. His father had been a colonel of dragoons, who, however, had left the army early, and devoted himself to that favorite occupation of retired army officers—agriculture.

His mother was a faded "Fräulein Von ——." She had all her linen—not only that included in her trousseau, but also that which was subsequently purchased for family use—embroidered with *her* coronet, raised a flag with the colors of *her* coat-of-arms on the turret of the little *château*, and permitted all her acquaintances to call her Baroness, although she had never borne that title.

When, a year after her marriage, she gave birth to a beautiful boy, there was, of course, a long discussion with regard to the name by which he should be baptized.

\* In many Catholic countries the name of the Virgin is given to boys in baptism—as, for instance, Carl Maria von Weber.—Tr.



"Cecil Maria!" lisped the mother.

"Nonsense! The boy shall be called Anton, after his grandfather," cried her husband very sensibly.

But on this the young wife burst into tears.

What can a man's good sense accomplish in opposition to the tears of the mother of his first-born?

The boy was christened Cecil Maria. When Stertzl senior was hardly forty, he died of scarlet fever. His youngest daughter, whom he idolized, was dangerously ill with that malignant disease, and he had contracted it while devoting himself to her care.

Cecil, at the time, was a handsome, rather clumsy lad, with great contempt for the French language, which his sister's governess was attempting to instil into him, and a decided predilection for an intercourse with coachmen and peasant boys. The baroness was constantly complaining that he was idle, and that he did not "take proper care" of his hands.

An elder brother of the deceased, General Stertzl, had been appointed guardian to the orphans. He was sincerely interested in the children's welfare, managed their property with circumspection, and supervised their education conscientiously. After a brief yet keen glance at the talented but neglected boy, his affected mother, and the timid tutor, he shrugged his shoulders at "such a mess," and placed Cecil at the "Theresianum"—that celebrated military academy for scions of the nobility which all Austrian officers consider



an excellent educational institution ; that is, if they have not been educated in it themselves.

For the first six months, Cecil felt wretchedly unhappy in his new surroundings. During the whole of his short life, he had been accustomed to be first everywhere; it seemed very hard to him suddenly to be last and least in the Theresianum.

Although he surpassed the greater part of his schoolmates in intelligence, he was yet, thanks to his neglected education, behind nearly all of them in his studies. And at that time, with the exception of a youth from Gratz, who was constantly boasting of a brilliant illegitimate pedigree, he was the only commoner in that aristocratic institution.

His comrades ridiculed his Moravian accent, his awkwardness, his name. We have all had to submit to similar jokes while at school. He could not become reconciled to the necessity of this for a long time, and during the first term did not cease to importune his mother and his guardian by letter for deliverance from his durance. But his mother and his guardian remained deaf to his entreaties.

The results which Cecil brought home from school in the midsummer vacation were a depressed state of mind and long white nails, to which he gave a great deal of care.

He commenced the next school-year by giving a thrashing to the tiresome boy from Gratz, who made himself odious to the whole school by his monotonous illegitimate boasts and other affectations. This secured for Cecil, for the moment, great popularity.



He began to study assiduously. His professors praised his progress: his complaints ceased.

Had that subtle, vanity-awakening poison which pervades the whole academy penetrated also to his soul? Did he, too, begin to feel the charm of hearing mass said by a bishop on Sundays and holidays, of being waited on every day by orderlies in gold-laced uniforms, of taking dancing-lessons of the same veteran ballet-dancer who teaches at court, of being on a thee-and-thou footing with the most aristocratic names of Austria? That was a question which would have been very difficult to decide. Apparently he accepted all this with the most profound indifference, nor did he put on any airs whatever. He had an enormous amount of pride.

Later on he was sent to the Oriental Academy, graduated from it with the highest honors, and then, still under his uncle's protection, entered upon a diplomatic career. He was sent to an Asiatic capital, which was just at that time infested by cholera and revolutionary disturbances. He distinguished himself, and received the Order of the Iron Cross.

There was one subject upon which Austrian society in Rome soon agreed: the new secretary of legation was not a person upon whom judgment could be passed with witty satire. There was nothing commonplace, nothing paltry about him.

He was a tall, broad-shouldered young man, with an erect carriage, which gave him the appearance



of an army officer in citizen's clothes; with brown hair, closely cropped, and strong, clear-cut features. His manners were rather awkward, though correct, but at the same time perfectly simple and unassuming.



### CHAPTER III.

THE opinion of the new secretary which the ambassador expressed was quite different from that of Sempaly.

“My best worker,” said his excellency; “a wonderful worker—keen head, enormous ability, but unfortunately but little pliability—too little pliability.”

And it was not only his chief whose regard he had won in a very short time: with his younger colleagues, too, he was soon on the most friendly terms. One quality, which is very rare in persons who take life as seriously as he did, manifested itself in him—he never cavilled.

The “complication-factory” in Rome was at that time so overcrowded with good-looking, graceful idlers that, as Sempaly remarked, with witty frivolity, the Palazzo di Venezia was creating more and more the impression of a select boarding-school for young countesses with mustaches. Stertzl tolerated their innocent doings with the utmost good-nature. No serious attention to business could possibly be expected from these young gentlemen; it would have been just as easy to train butterflies to work like ants. He was always ready to hush up their little neglects of duty, to concede every liberty to their pleasures. His aim was to work, to accom-



plish something—that was *his* affair; they wanted to trifle, to enjoy life—that was *theirs*. And, in the mean time, they all agreed charmingly.

But though Stertzl had soon made himself extremely popular among his colleagues, between him and Roman society there reigned a certain coldness.

His predecessor had not made the slightest pretensions to accomplishing anything in the way of his profession. But he waltzed well, and, what is more, did not despise that occupation. He had been a favorite with the ladies. They deplored his loss deeply, and were looking forward with impatience to the advent of his successor. Stertzl was little calculated to replace him. He was entirely wanting in that cheerful amenity and amiable superficiality which are indispensable to a man's popularity in the world.

His grave conscientiousness and pedantic frankness quite unfitted him for the desultory intercourse of society.

In company he was mostly a silent observer. When he did talk, he always said exactly what he thought, and expected every one else to do the same. He could not understand that the flatteries and hypocritical considerations customary in society are, after all, but a stunted kind of charity; that the universal sincerity which he demanded would necessarily have degenerated into a universal war; that the dividing-line between frankness and impertinence, between hypocrisy and a sense of pro-



priety, has not yet been clearly defined; that it is just as unsuitable to speak the whole truth in company as to appear there in shirt-sleeves; that, in view of the defective nature of our souls, we must rejoice at the rules of propriety which forbid us to show these souls inadequately clothed. Good heavens! what would we behold if this were not the case?

We cannot exist without falsehood.

A person who is used to society demands a falsehood of it. It is his right, a courtesy to which he has a claim. As soon as a man in society is no longer "worth lying to," he has "finished his part," like Countess Orsina, and "can go his way." \*

With ladies Stertzl had no success whatever. They called him "*le paysan du Danube*."

Men respected him; they merely regretted his extravagant notions, particularly his morbid sensitiveness with regard to affairs of honor. But that is a fault which is never seriously censured by the male sex.

Stertzl was utterly indifferent to what was said of him by people for whom he had no personal regard. Ever ready to make any sacrifice for a friend, he sometimes forgot even to bow to acquaintances in the street. With his head full of magnificent projects, he pursued his aim with decision and directness. He was certainly destined to accomplish great things, possibly to reach a great end—but——

\* See Lessing's "*Emilia Galotti*."—TR.



## CHAPTER IV.

PRINCESS VULPINI, who had caught the contagion of the new fashionable disease, "morbus Schlie-maniensis," had discovered a new and remarkable prize at a second-hand dealer's in the Via d'Aracœli. She had purchased from him two wonderful es-cutcheons, said to be from drawings by Benvenuto Cellini, and a piece of tapestry-hanging after designs by Raphael, and had now invited a few intimate friends, Truyn, Sempaly, General Von Klinger and an Austrian *attaché*, Count Siegburg, to investigate the genuineness of her acquisitions.

The princess was a sister of Truyn's, and was perhaps a few years older than her brother Eric. She had made the acquaintance of the prince at Vichy, where she had spent a bathing-season with her invalid father, had married him soon after, and for the past ten or twelve years had resided in Rome, which she loved, although she had never ceased to complain of various Roman discomforts, still had a great affection for Vienna, and had everything she needed sent from "home," because she was convinced that there was nothing to be bought in Rome but photographs, antiquities, and wax-tapers.



Dinner was over; the conversation had been very animated. The whole time had been spent in railing at the new Italian government. When coffee and cigarettes made their appearance, all turned their attention to the antiquities, which were lying on the carpet, ready for investigation. Now one, then another of the gentlemen went down on the floor on his hands and knees, in order to look closely at the *arazzi* and at the bronzes, and then conscientiously gave his opinion.

The only person who was thoroughly convinced of the genuineness of these objects was Countess Marie Schalingen, a canoness, who had been in Rome only a few weeks, and was a guest of the princess. The others had their doubts. The one who expressed his most energetically was Count Siegburg, who, though he understood less than any one present about such things, flung about him the words "galvanoplastic" and "imitation" with sovereign *aplomb*.

Wieprecht, or, as he was called, Wips Siegburg, was a great favorite in the Austrian circle. I hardly think that he would have invented gunpowder, or determined the motion of the earth; but, on the other hand, he was certainly far more agreeable for social intercourse than Berthold Schwarz or Galileo would have been. He had been attached to the legation, not to make a career, but simply to get him away from Vienna, where his debts had of late assumed entirely too formidable proportions. His widowed mother, after long pondering



the matter, had at last discovered this advantageous mode of checking her son's extravagance.

"You make me nervous, Siegburg!" cried the princess, at last; "you know you have not the faintest idea of the value of antiquities."

"You may be right, princess," was his calm reply. "At any rate, I've lost a good deal of my firm faith in my critical powers lately. Formerly I imagined that the genuineness of a piece of antiquity could be determined by the amount of dirt adhering to it. But since I have learned that even the dirt is often counterfeited, I have no longer any rule to go by."

This little sally caused general merriment—not because it was very witty, but because people always laughed at everything which Siegburg said.

They were all assembled in the smoking-room, an apartment rendered as picturesque as it was comfortable by dark carved furniture and Oriental rugs, and the company was pervaded by the true "*entre-nous*" spirit—a mixture of courteous amenity and cordial familiarity. They did not exactly converse in an intellectual way on learned topics; they even gossiped a little, made some very bad jokes, and related anecdotes which savored of St. Simon, and yet harmed no one, because neither those who told them nor those who listened followed up every episode to its remotest consequences, or chemically analyzed the point of every witticism—in a word, because they were not thorough. Superficiality is a good thing at times.



"I feel so thoroughly at home, so Austrian to-night," said the princess: "I only fear our pleasure will be of short duration. I have a presentiment of evil: Countess Gandry and Mrs. Ferguson are dining in the neighborhood."

At that moment "Sua Eccellenza il Principe Norina" was announced.

"Coming events cast their shadows before them," quoted Sempaly in a low tone. It was a well-known fact that whenever Principe Norina made his appearance in a Roman *salon*, Countess Gandry would arrive soon after.

The Principe was tall and fair-haired, a male fashion-plate beauty, and had been for four or five years the slave of the above-mentioned lady.

He paid his respects to the princess, shook hands generally, and then was involved by the master of the house in a lively conversation upon—the latest abuses perpetrated by the royal government? Vulpini belonged to the blackest of the black, was a firm adherent of the Papal party, more from a political than from a religious point of view—chiefly because he, a fanatically exclusive Roman, could not endure to make common cause with the "Italians," and looked upon the "Unita Italia" as a party-colored chimera.

The Principe Norina, who had no political convictions whatever, and who frequented the "Caccia" Club \* quite as much as the "Scacchi," † nodded as-

\* Hunting Club.

† Chess Club.



sent to all that was said, and did not follow the prince at all.

Soon after his arrival the company repaired to the *salon*, a drearily vast apartment filled with a rather variegated mixture of Louis XIV. and Empire furniture, which was situated between the official reception-hall, where the princess received the world in general, and her boudoir, to which only her most intimate friends were admitted.

The vivacity of the general conversation had diminished considerably, and the moment had arrived when several of those present were beginning to look over photographs.

Mesdames de Gandry and Ferguson were announced, and entered the room with a loud rustling of dresses.

Countess Gandry, a pale brunette, interesting rather than handsome, with a short nose and unpleasantly piercing eyes; very loud and very fond of admiration, at the same time impertinent and regardless of others—chiefly because she considered it "*grand genre*" to be so—had for the past five years held her sceptre over Principe Norina.

Society, however, possibly for its own convenience, had tacitly agreed with itself to look upon the relation of the two as merely a friendly one. Countess Gandry bore the reputation of being one of those women who, never subject to giddiness, take pleasure in walking on the edge of precipices.

Mrs. Ferguson, the daughter of a hotel-keeper in San Francisco, and the wife of an ever-invisible



Croesus, was, in contrast to Madame de Gandry, very white, with very light hair, large eyes, and small, sharp teeth. She was, withal, very frail in figure and flat in the bust, like almost all American women. She dyed her hair, painted, dressed very conspicuously, spoke queer English and wretched French, sang doubtful couplets like Judic, and had been launched on society by the Marchese B——, whose acquaintance she had made at Nice. Her friendship with Countess Gandry had commenced with a common landau, would culminate in a common box at the opera, and probably be wrecked by a common adorer.

A few more gentlemen also arrived. Count Gandry, who looked like an elegant hair-dresser, and was suspected of carrying on an anonymous trade in antiquities; further, Mr. Dieudonné Crespigny de Bellancourt, a broad-shouldered French diplomat, son of a butcher, brother-in-law to a duke, etc. . . . The conversation turned upon the latest domestic trial of the del Z——'s, on the Roman climate, and on excavations. Mesdames de Gandry and Ferguson at first submitted to the decorous tedium of a general conversation, but soon, by various tricks, contrived to concentrate upon themselves as much masculine attention as was at all attainable under the circumstances.

After eleven o'clock Countess Ilsenbergh made her appearance. She had come from a grand gala-dinner, and looked bored.

"It is really ridiculous what kind of people you



meet here in Rome," she remarked in the course of the conversation, after having answered various questions about the *fête* which she had attended.

"Do you know whom I saw to-day, Marie? That Lenz woman from Vienna—now, by the way, her name is Montidor; she has become a contessa or duchessa, I don't know which. I had something to do with her years ago in some charitable affair. And now she rushes up to me, hails me as an old acquaintance, acts as if we were quite intimate; talks about '*we* Austrians,' and '*our* Vienna!' Isn't that comical, eh?"

"Hm! poor Fritzi! You are really to be pitied," remarked Sempaly, with a malicious smile. "Well, you have another especial pleasure in prospect: mother and sister Stertzl will be in Rome in a few days."

"Indeed? . . . . Hm! That is rather disagreeable."

"Why?" asked Madame de Gandry, joining in the conversation with great vivacity. "Are they suspicious characters?"

"*Pas du tout*," Countess Ilsenbergh interrupted her quickly; "I believe they are the most respectable people in the world, but—it is at all events dreadfully embarrassing to be constantly meeting persons in society whom you can't possibly see in Vienna. You ought to give him a hint, Nicki. . . . You ought to tell him . . . tell him. . . ."

"Yes, Fritzi," replied Sempaly, smiling; "I'll say to him: 'My dear fellow, don't think of taking your



ladies into society here: it would shock my cousin, Countess Ilsenbergh, terribly.' "

The countess turned away from her provoking cousin with a shrug of the shoulders, opened and shut her yellow tortoise-shell fan rather nervously, and then asked: "Shall you receive these people, Marie?"

"Whom do I *not* receive?" replied the princess, in an undertone, with a peculiar look.

"I cannot do it—decidedly not!" cried Countess Ilsenbergh, more and more irritated, "although I should be very sorry to hurt Stertzl's feelings. He would have only himself to blame if I were forced to do it."

"Do as you like," said the princess; "but you know I am much interested in Stertzl—he is a great favorite of mine."

"That '*paysan du Danube*'?" giggled Madame de Gandry, to whom the conversation of the two Austrian ladies remained rather incomprehensible.

"Stertzl is a very respectable young man," remarked Countess Ilsenbergh icily; she could not permit Countess Gandry to ridicule her countryman, even though he was a commoner.

"The '*paysan du Danube*' is my especial friend," said Princess Vulpini very decidedly, with the almost childlike ingenuousness that so distinguished her whole manner. "I like him: we always remain *entre nous* with him."

"You could find no higher praise than that in



the whole world, to be sure," said Truyn with good-natured sarcasm.

"When my little boy broke his arm, here in this room, Stertzl took him up; and you ought to have seen how tenderly he lifted my poor pet," continued the princess.

"That is certainly proof positive of his mother's and sister's admissibility to society," remarked Sempaly with a laugh.

"Excuse my asking," cried Countess Gandry, throwing herself into the conversation; "it is merely for the sake of knowing what to do. Are the Stertzls not received in society in Austria?"

"Our Austrian customs can hardly establish a precedent for foreign society," said Truyn rather sharply, Madame de Gandry being no favorite of his. "We do not receive any one who does not belong to our set by birth."

"Yes," said Sempaly humorously, "Austrian society is as exclusive as the tribe of Israel. It disdains to make converts."

And the leather-dealer's daughter, who evidently had not understood, or did not wish to understand Truyn's words, said, with much assurance: "I am glad to be *au fait* on the matter."

Siegburg, who was sitting somewhat behind her, winked at Sempaly, and made an inimitable grimace.

Princess Vulpini looked almost angry. "I shall not desert Stertzl," she cried, "and if his sister is as he describes her——"



"Has he told you about his sister already?" Sempaly interrupted her.

"I should think he had," replied the princess with a good-natured smile; "has he told you anything about her?"

"No, indeed; he never talks with me on subjects sacred to him—I am not worthy of it," answered Sempaly. "He only announced her coming to me, and that with a very peculiar smile. Hm! he seems to think a good deal of the young lady, and will probably want to marry her off advantageously. I should be surprised if he had any other motive in having her come down here. Norina, be on your guard."

"Mademoiselle Stertzl will hardly lay claim to a closed coronet," exclaimed Countess Gandry, defending her property with some vehemence.

"Stertzl will not let his sister go at a lower price," maintained Sempaly.

"Don't talk such nonsense," said Truyn, trying to check his cousin's flippancy.

The latter, in the mean time, had been bending over a little side-table, and was industriously scribbling on the back of an old letter with his gold pencil. After a while he handed the paper to Countess Ilsenbergh.

Madame de Gandry looked over her shoulder.

"Capital!" she cried, "capital!"

On the paper Stertzl was represented as an auctioneer, a hammer in one hand, a very fashionably dressed little doll in the other, while around



him crowded all the closed coronets of Rome. In one corner of the page was written: "Mademoiselle Stertzl going—going—gone!"

The drawing passed from one hand to the other. The resemblance to Stertzl was striking.

Soon after, Countess Ilsenbergh took her leave, and, as the remaining guests were not very animated, the two other ladies also withdrew before long, upon which those gentlemen who had come only on their account followed their example.

"Fritzi really has an *idée fixe*," said the princess, shrugging her shoulders, when all indiscreet strangers had disappeared. "Fancy her wanting me to take precautionary measures in advance against that poor girl! How could Fräulein Stertzl possibly incommode me?"

"I can't understand what she means, either," replied Siegburg. "However, I have thought of a plan: if the young lady is pretty, and has money, I'll marry her; *çela régularisera la position*."

Siegburg was particularly fond of talking about the money which he intended his future wife to have. He was continually boasting of the self-interest which he did not possess, just as very rich people often boast of their poverty.

"Moreover, it was a great want of tact in Fritzi to ventilate this silly reception question before those two strange women," continued the princess. She was fond of occasionally using strong expressions—which, however, lost all repulsiveness in passing her lips, and sometimes, indeed, were in-



vested with a peculiar piquancy; "think of her wanting me to become exclusive all of a sudden!"

"Did you observe how *Madame la Comtesse* is preparing to follow in Fritz's footsteps?" asked Siegburg.

During this conversation Truyn was nervously searching the mantelpiece and the *étagère* which stood near it, in doing which the master of the house good-naturedly assisted him.

"What are you looking for, Eric?" asked the princess.

"Oh, for Sempaly's drawing! I don't care to leave the thing lying about. Excuse me, Nicki, the caricature was capital; I should not have objected to it in the least if we had been by ourselves, but you ought not to have shown it to those strangers. You are too thoughtless; you don't consider what you are doing."

"What have I done now?" asked Sempaly, not without annoyance.

"You have simply stamped this young girl as an adventuress on the lookout for a good match."

"Pah! If every careless joke were to be taken so seriously!" replied Sempaly.

The caricature was again searched for everywhere, but in vain.

"I am convinced that that *piazzarola* has taken it!" cried the princess, much vexed. By that *piazzarola* she of course meant Countess Gandry.



## CHAPTER V.

YES, Princess Vulpini was interested in Stertzl, very warmly interested in him, and he returned her friendship with an almost enthusiastic reverence. In spite of his outwardly cold and matter-of-fact manner, he had a poetically chivalrous vein running through his nature, and felt the highest admiration for pure, true womanliness.

He did not consider it worth his while to pay women those compliments, often impertinent and indiscreet, which please some of them; and of modern gallantry he did not know even the alphabet.

But, on the other hand, his demeanor in his intercourse with those whom he called "true women" had much of chivalrous protection and deferential reserve; his whole manner toward them was so full of old-fashioned, kind-hearted courtesy that he could not but gain ground with them.

He always treated them partly as children, who ought to be protected, and partly as sacred objects, to whom one should bend the knee.

Very shortly after his arrival in Rome, the princess had begun to take great pleasure in her intercourse with him. She soon confided to him all her



little annoyances at one or another Roman discomfort, and allowed him to execute many little commissions for her, as, like all women with her amiable disposition, she made too much of trifles, besides being thoroughly unpractical.



## CHAPTER VI.

MARIE TRUYN had been, in her day, one of the loveliest girls in the aristocratic circles of Vienna, and now there was no more charming woman in Rome than the Principessa Vulpini. When, of an afternoon, she drove in her *huit-ressorts*, with her four or five beautiful children, who looked as if they had been stolen from a picture-book of Kate Greenaway's, through the Corso to the Villa Borghese, the women of fashion, who, instead of their children, took some elegant lady friend out driving with them, would say: "Here comes the hen with her chickens!" But the men bowed very low to her, and she returned their greeting so cordially and with so sweet a smile that it made one think of spring sunshine.

She had never been regularly handsome, and had even early lost her youthful freshness, as well as the slender figure which had at one time been almost proverbial; nevertheless, there was still an indescribable charm about her. The greatest ornament of her youth, her very thick light brown hair, she still possessed. She wore it as she had worn it as a girl of sixteen, drawn back plainly from her temples and coiled in thick plaits low in the neck behind.

In her sweet face, with the small, kindly eyes, a



delicate little *retroussé* nose, a soft mouth, which was beautiful only when she smiled, there was, in spite of its fading pallor, something of an almost childlike loveliness. Her movements were simple and graceful. Around her whole personality there hovered the charm of the highest refinement and the truest womanliness.

In her dress she was rather behind the fashion: the higher "chic" made her uncomfortable. She read a great deal, and that on serious subjects, even on natural science. Notwithstanding this she had retained the simple, unquestioning faith of her earliest youth. This primitive Catholicism was thoroughly in accordance with the warm-hearted simplicity of her whole manner. Sempaly, who was very proud of her, always alluded to her religious enthusiasm as a particularly pleasing feature of her character. He declared that, to be truly attractive, a woman must be religious; a man might take the liberty of being a free-thinker; but a woman without religion was as repulsive as one with a hump on her back.

This opinion, which Sempaly expressed toward Stertzl on one occasion, gave offence to the latter, although he possessed even less positive religion than Sempaly. He thought it frivolous.

"We should not ridicule women who are sacred to us," he said, with the rigid pedantry which always raised a spirit of contradiction in Sempaly.

The latter, however, merely made a sarcastic grimace and shrugged his shoulders.



## CHAPTER VII.

A FEW days after Sempaly had given such a brilliant proof of his talent for humorous sketching, General Von Klinger was sitting in his studio on a divan picturesquely draped with a Persian rug, and was trying, as he had no other more useful way of spending his time, to teach his parrot the Austrian national hymn; a loyal piece of work, to which, however, the parrot, seated on the top of his cage, and flapping his wings loudly, offered vehement opposition.

The general's studio was a splendid one; a vaulted hall, with a frescoed ceiling, surrounded by bold rococo stucco-work, and the walls hung with various *arrazzi*, Oriental rugs, and other tapestries. In this vast apartment human beings looked like dwarfs, and the general's paintings like the illustrations in a picture-book.

Outside the sirocco was brooding, warm and gray, and the general was in a depressed mood. As was frequently the case, he did not get along well with his painting, and although the clock had just struck the quarter before five, no visitors had as yet knocked at his door. Almost every day many people dropped in at that hour, sometimes even too many. The general often complained—



privately, of course—of this interruption, and yet was always glad of being thus entertained. It made him melancholy to be alone. On the day in question he was sadly considering how difficult it was to progress satisfactorily in an artist's career. His coloring was excellent—all his brother artists assured him of that—but his drawing was imperfect; of that he was himself aware. His specialties were a harmonious gray tone, and horses' cruppers. All his pictures, with the exception of one which the emperor had bought at a large price, more on account of his general's former military services rather than for his present artistic merits—returned unsold from the various exhibitions to which they were sent. The artists who smoked his cigars explained this by the fact that he was too independent in his artistic work, too proud "to make concessions to the public," and, in consequence, no widespread success was to be expected.

He was on the point of whistling the national hymn to the parrot for the sixteenth time, when there was a knock at his outer door. He went to answer the summons, and found Sempaly. The latter had come to announce to the general that he had discovered a badly damaged but still very handsome piece of tapestry in a convent, and had bought it for a song. In reality he had purchased it for the general, as he knew that the latter had for some time been looking for something of the kind. "But if you should not like it," he concluded, "I will keep it myself."



No one could do a favor more unassumingly, no one express his thanks for one conferred upon him more cordially than he. That was another of his charming little talents.

After the two had settled their business, Sempaly began to complain, in a heart-breaking manner, of the great misfortune of being obliged to dine at the English Legation that evening, and later attend a ball at the French ambassador's, and then confided to his old friend his longing for an ideal life, in which routs, balls, and dinners would be entirely done away with. Next he proceeded to examine the general's studies, which the latter always cautiously placed with their faces against the wall. After his Austrian fashion he alternately said "charming!" and "superb!"—merely from good-nature, and because he felt irresistibly impelled to say something pleasant to everybody.

"Why don't you finish that thing?" he asked, at last, pointing to a sketch of a couple of Bashi-Bazouks.

"It would sell better," replied the general rather testily, the "finishing" of his sketches having always presented insurmountable difficulties to him; "but you know I never make any concessions to the crowd; I conform to my convictions, never to the demands of the public."

At this artistic creed Sempaly smiled, which was no more than it deserved.

"As the sale of your pictures is, after all, nothing but a caprice in your case," he said civilly, "I



would advise you to give up all idea of it, and leave the whole collection to the government, so that we in Vienna can have a Musée Wierzbowski, too."

But when the general assured him that he was perfectly serious with regard to selling his pictures, Sempaly put on a quizzical look, and began: "There was once a cobbler, and he was a genius, but he always conformed only to his sense of the beautiful and his artistic convictions, and therefore he made nothing but Greek sandals. He died a bankrupt, but with the agreeable consciousness of never having made concessions to the public! . . ."

The general was on the point of giving a sharp answer to this malicious invention, when that loud knocking was once more heard outside which is almost *de règle* on the doors of studios. It sometimes takes a good deal to waken an artist from his dreams.

The general went to the door. The studio was divided from the hall by a little ante-room. Past him there darted, tall, slender, and very pretty, a blonde will-o'-the-wisp in a dark dress and a seal-skin sacque.

"You, Zinka!—what a surprise!" cried the old gentleman, highly pleased. "When did you get here?"

"This morning," replied a merry voice. "Did no one come with you?" continued the general in surprise, as Zinka closed the door, which he had left open, and hastened past him into the studio.

"No, nobody," she replied simply; "I left the



maid at home; she and mamma are both fast asleep, to get over the journey. I came alone in the carriage; wasn't that nice of me, eh? Why, what are you making such a queer face for? . . . . Why haven't you given me a kiss yet, uncle?" Firm and defiant, her head thrown slightly back, her hands in a very small muff, the young girl stood before him, looking at him in astonishment with a pair of very large gray eyes

"My dear Zinka," began the general, who, like all conscientious old gentlemen with a romantic past, laid almost too much stress on outward decorum where his lady friends were concerned, "I am delighted to see you. . . . But in a strange city, where nobody knows you, and in a strange house, where. . . ."

"Ah, now I see!" cried the young girl. . . . "Ah, *it is not proper!* . . . I shall get to be a hundred years old before I can learn what *is* proper! Strange, my poor uncle used to say that there was no use in thinking about it, because for respectable people everything was proper, and for those who were not respectable everything was proper too. But he evidently knew nothing about it!" With this she turned on her heel energetically, and went toward the door.

"But, my dear Zinka," cried the general, holding her back, "do tell me, at least, where you are stopping, before you rush away like a small whirlwind. Don't be unreasonable."

"I am perfectly reasonable," she answered. She



was very much embarrassed and exceedingly angry; her cheeks burned, the tears sparkled in her eyes.

"I never should have supposed of my own accord that it was not proper for me to visit an *old gentleman*"—and she emphasized the words maliciously—"in his studio. O masculine vanity! when will thy limits ever be discovered? But I am reasonable; I acknowledge my fault. . . . Fool that I am! . . . There I have been looking forward all day to surprising you at your reception-hour, and was going to ask you to dine with us at the Hotel de l'Europe, and first to drive up to the Pincio with me and see the sunset. And this is my reward! . . . Don't take your hat; it is no use; I shall not take you with me now, you may be sure. Good-by!"

With this she hurried away, with head erect, and without once looking back at the general, who conscientiously accompanied her down the stairs and to her carriage.

He came back to his studio very much out of sorts. There he was greeted by a laughing voice:

"Thoroughly in disgrace, general!"

"So it seems," said the latter curtly, and commenced cleaning a palette.

"But do tell me, who is this haughty little princess?"

"Who is she? . . . She is Zinka Stertzl, my god-child!"



## CHAPTER VIII.

LOVE at first sight is quite out of fashion; nobody believes in it nowadays. Nevertheless, it remains a fact, never disputed even by Sempaly himself, that he did fall in love with Zinka at first sight.

And when the general, a few days after that young lady, in the precipitate manner described above, had rushed into his studio, accepted an invitation to dine at the Hotel de l'Europe with "Baroness Stertzl," he found, when he entered the drawing-room, Zinka busily engaged in looking over photographs with—Sempaly! He and the general were the only guests. Notwithstanding, or rather in consequence thereof, the little dinner was as animated and as entertaining as was possible at a table which was presided over by so affected a lay-figure as the baroness.

The latter, thoroughly foolish and weak-minded, was an embodiment of vanity and absurdity. She imagined, Heaven knows why, that the general, in former days, had cherished an unrequited affection for her, and accordingly constantly treated him with a tenderness which was most trying to his nerves. Besides this, since she had last seen the general—and that was before she, or rather her chil-



dren, had become quite rich by the sale of considerable real estate—she had made astonishing progress with regard to affected importance, which of course contributed greatly toward making an intercourse with her particularly agreeable. She was always complaining, in a pseudo-aristocratic, whining tone, of everything; of the discomforts of sleeping-coupés, of the hard cushions in the cars, of Roman dirt, Roman livery-stables, and Roman hotels; she dragged the names of all the aristocratic acquaintances which she had made lately at Meran, Nice, and Biarritz, into the conversation, and asked, the next day being a holiday, to what church “one could go.”

To this the choleric old general replied testily: “God is everywhere,” while Sempaly merely answered, with the gravest politeness: “Cardinal X—— is going to say mass in St. Peter’s to-morrow, and the music is very fine. I should advise you to go to St. Peter’s.”

“Indeed? Will it really do to go to St. Peter’s on a holiday?” she asked. “The company in those large churches is generally so mixed!”

The old general was ashamed of these silly speeches, for the sake of her children, who were obliged to listen to them. “Have you forgiven me by this time, Zinka?” he called out to the young girl across the table, in order to change the current of the conversation.

“As if I had had time to think of your pedantry,” said Zinka, blushing slightly; it was evidently un-



pleasant to her to remember her little blunder. "I have other troubles now."

"What are they, darling?" asked Stertzl, who took everything seriously, in a tone of sympathy.

"I have lost something," she said with an air of sadness, which evidently concealed a jest.

"Not a four-leaved clover, or a medal blessed by the Pope, I hope?" asked the general.

"Oh, no! something far more valuable."

"Your pocketbook?" guessed the baroness in an irritated tone. But Zinka burst out laughing, and cried: "No, indeed, mamma—something much grander. . . . Can no one guess? . . . I have lost Rome!"

Hereupon Stertzl, who never understood his charming sister's "crazy little jokes," remarked: "That is quite beyond me!"

Sempaly, however, said sympathizingly: "I see, Fräulein; the great disenchantment has come to you too!" and Zinka went on talking, like a person who is accustomed to being listened to.

"Since I have thought at all, I have dreamed of and longed for Rome. *My* Rome always seemed to me like a suburb of heaven, and *this* Rome is like a suburb of Paris! *My* Rome was *so* beautiful, and *this* Rome is so ugly!"

"Don't talk sacrilege, Zinka," said the general, who shared the traditional idolatry for Rome.

"As a city, Rome is certainly not handsome," remarked Stertzl in a matter-of-fact way; "it is merely interesting as an art-atlas with life-size



illustrations. However, you don't know it yet. You have not yet looked at anything——"

"But lodgings, you mean," said Zinka, casting down her eyes with mischievous meekness.

"It is dreadful," complained the baroness; "we have been searching, for five days, without having been able to find anything suitable. Everywhere there is some objection: either the stairs are too dark, or the vestibule too shabby, or the drawing-room has only one entrance. . . . or the servants' rooms are. . . ."

"Indeed, my poor Zinka," exclaimed the general indignantly, interrupting the baroness, "if you have really not seen anything of Rome yet except all the furnished lodgings on the Corso, then, to be sure, . . ."

"But I have seen something more than that," cried Zinka merrily; "I have become thoroughly acquainted with Rome already."

"In your dreams?"

"No, yesterday, while mamma had her headache."

"Oh, that headache!" sighed the baroness, holding her smelling-salts to her nose. "I am a real martyr to it."

According to her ideas, it was stylish to have headaches, as well as to be a strict Roman Catholic.

No one took any notice of her, however, except Sempaly, who, from politeness, looked sympathizing, but immediately turned to Zinka with a question.



“Yes, indeed, I know Rome quite well! Only, ask cab-driver No. 1203—he’ll tell you all about it. He drove me around yesterday for more than three hours. You can imagine that it was rather trying to have been in Rome for a whole week without having seen anything but furnished apartments. So I made the most of my time yesterday, and while mamma was in bed, I stole out—don’t look shocked again, uncle—I took my maid with me, and we only intended to wander about on foot with the help of the map. Of course we lost our way—*cela va sans dire*; and as we stood there, rather bewildered, each of us holding the map with one hand, we saw a cab-driver beckoning to us, like this, with his forefinger. We got into the cab, and he asked where he should take us, and when I hesitated what to answer, he said—with oh, such a discreet, patronizing expression, ‘The Signora wishes to see Rome?’ and then he drove us, always making small circles, through the whole city. My head became quite confused with all those sights of Rome. He showed me a great forest of broken columns, on the stumps of which small pieces of old gods and fragments of ancient temples were carefully heaped up, like Christmas presents for lovers of antiquity. ‘*Il Campo Vaccino*,’ he called that—I think it was the Forum. Then he showed me the palace of Beatrice Cenci, the Ghetto, the Theatre of Marcellus, the Temple of Vesta; and each time, when he had explained one of these monuments to me, he would ask; ‘Am I not a conscientious driver? Many a



one would only just take you from one building to another, and what do you see? Nothing but stones! But I say to you: that is the Coliseum, that is the Portico of Octavia, and the stones have a meaning at once!' Then he set me down at the hotel, and took off his hat, and said: 'Now the signora knows Rome!' "

The dessert had been served; the baroness looked very much vexed. "I would request you," she said, as she rose from the table, "in the first place, not to carry on conversations with cab-drivers in future, and, in the second, not to make use of a *botta* (Roman one-horse cab) when you go to drive. It is not proper. You never have the slightest tact."

Zinka, who was quite as sensitive as she was spoiled, changed color.

"Leave her alone, mother. Why should she not talk Italian a little and ride in a *botta*?" said Stertzl, who wrangled with his mother from morning till night.

In the mean time, Sempaly made use of the moment for whispering to Zinka: "I can't promise to entertain you as well as your cab-driver; but if you will permit me, I should be very glad to help you recover your lost Rome."

"Are you well acquainted with the city?" asked Zinka, with *naïve* incivility.

"I am the *valet-de-place* of the complication factory," he replied, laughing. "My only serious business consists in showing Rome to all the transient Austrian tourists,"



The evening passed very cheerfully. The baroness made a few more foolish speeches, and Sempaly, with the most polite gravity, passed them over in silence. Altogether, he was irreproachable that evening. The baroness, altogether, was dazzled by his "unassuming manner." Not so Stertzl, who felt that it was only external, and nothing but an aristocratic trick.

But the arrival of his little sister, his favorite, had put Stertzl into very good humor. He did, indeed, launch a few of his aphorisms against the clericals, and abused Roman society a little; but Zinka interrupted him each time with some of her graceful nonsense, and her small-talk made him forget everything else.

Finally he asked her to sing a Moravian folksong. She sat down at the hotel piano, and accompanied herself. Her sweet, though weak and veiled voice had in it something quaint, almost mystical; her singing was full of the dreamy sadness which characterizes the true Slavonic spirit.

Stertzl, who was wont to yawn at the opera, listened to her, leaning his head on his hand, with a kind of enthusiasm.

In Sempaly, too, who, in spite of his Hungarian name, was a Moravian by birth, Zinka's simple melodies awakened echoes of the pure, fresh sentiments of his youth, which had been blotted out by the vortex of the world. When she had finished, he thanked her simply, but with deep feeling.

Zinka had a temperament like April weather.



After drawing the tears to her hearers' eyes, and her own as well, by her folk-songs, she suddenly conceived the idea of mischievously breaking out into a *couplet* of Lecocq's, which she had heard Judic sing in Nice.

The words of this *couplet*, which Zinka rendered with so much self-satisfaction, were evidently Chaldaic to her, as far as her comprehension of them went, which was obvious to every sensible person. The baroness, however, was beside herself with indignation.

"Zinka!" she cried vehemently, "I cannot comprehend you; what must these gentlemen think of you?"

"Don't trouble yourself about that, madame," said the general.

Zinka trembled; her small, white face was quivering with excitement. Stertzl, however, came to the rescue: "We have to make allowances for my little sister's moods sometimes," he said, turning to Sempaly; and then, passing his large, heavy hand very tenderly over Zinka's hair, he continued: "Don't mind it, butterfly; but you are really a little too innocent for your age."

When, shortly after, Sempaly and the general left the Hotel de l'Europe together, the first words of the former were: "Explain to me, if you can, how it happens that, in spite of her silly mother, that little girl has remained so angelically pure, so —Botticelli-like!"



## CHAPTER IX.

ABOUT this time a certain Bohemian or Polish mine was destroyed by some disaster caused by the elements; more than five hundred families were thrown out of employment by the catastrophe.

Of course society immediately seized upon this opportunity to divert itself by brilliant charity-balls, to win decorations by magnificent pecuniary sacrifices, and to draw the attention of the world upon itself by various vehemently humane demonstrations.

Countess Ilsenbergh, after due consideration of the matter, had arrived at the conviction that, as the two legations were prevented by deep mourning from indulging in any festive enterprises just at that time, it was her duty to set in motion something of the kind.

The apartments of Palazzo . . . . seemed expressly made for a large *fête*. After much cogitation it was decided to give the philanthropic undertaking a dramatic character. The programme was to consist of an operetta, a "*Proverbe*" by De Musset, and several *tableaux vivants*. The performance was to be followed by a collection.

Countess Gandry displayed the most praiseworthy energy in the whole affair. She was on



friendly terms with the Villa Medici—the French Academy in Rome; she therefore took charge of the painting of the scenery, the artistic arrangement of the costumes, and made herself generally useful.

Up to a certain time everything progressed successfully. The operetta (an unpublished work, of course, furnished by a Russian amateur genius who took pride in not being able to read a note of music) was soon cast. It contained only three characters, and gave occasion for a very pretty rococo masquerade, as well as for the introduction of *piquant* Parisian couplets.

Mrs. Ferguson, who scorned no opportunity of powdering her hair and applying rouge and patches to her face, was to sing the soprano part. Crespigny declared his willingness to take the rôle of a husband or guardian in a night-cap and a flowery dressing-gown, and a young painter from the Villa Medici, who was always ready either to design or to don a tasteful costume, was invested with the part of the lover.

Nor did the cast of the "*Proverbe*" offer any difficulties. But when the question of the arrangement of the tableaux arose, the whole affair came to a sudden stop. In the beginning, the ladies had of course been enthusiastically in favor of allowing their beauty to be admired under the advantageous circumstances presented by a tableau. The great number of those who offered their services presented the first difficulties to the committee, which held daily debates at Countess Ilsenbergh's resi-



dence. Then various discussions and differences of opinion arose. The ladies did not approve of the choice of the pictures, condemned the costumes assigned to them as unbecoming, or the postures prescribed as not showing them favorably. Each one to whom a minor figure was proposed felt deeply offended; an acknowledged beauty, who was particularly proud of her left profile, would not for the world have exposed the right side of her face to the criticism of the public, etc., etc.

And then, too—unfortunate embarrassment!—almost all the available male personages of the clique exhibited the most unconquerable repugnance to “ridiculous masquerades,” and categorically refused the most insinuating invitations from the Ladies’ Committee.

Sempaly, to whom the proposition had been made to represent a Roman emperor, would not hear of putting on pink tights and allowing himself to be crowned with the wreath of a Bacchant; and Truyn had replied to the suggestion that he should don a periwig merely by a shrug of his shoulders.

Siegburg—he was always called little Siegburg, although he measured nearly six feet—after defending himself very wittily for a while against the entreaties of the ladies, at last made up his mind goodnaturedly to make the harlequin in a rococo picture in which the Vulpini children were to take part; and Stertzl agreed, though somewhat curtly, to represent the executioner in the Lady Jane Grey tableau after Delaroche.



This latter tableau was to be the gem of the evening; Barillat had taken far more pains with it than with any of the others. The part of Lady Jane Grey was to be filled by a famous English beauty, Lady Henrietta Stair.

But a few days before the performance, Lady Henrietta was taken ill with the measles. The managers were greatly embarrassed when the news of this misfortune reached them. That same evening the committee and all who were to take part in the tableaux were invited to a friendly cup of tea at the Palazzo —, in order to discuss the matter. They appeared almost in full force. Stertzl, who was disgusted with all this "charitable fuss," as he called it, was the only one who sent a regret.

Every lady secretly thought herself entitled to stand, or rather kneel for Lady Jane Grey; but Mrs. Ferguson was the first who gave words to her thoughts, and heroically offered to take Lady Henrietta's place.

To the surprise of all, Sempaly, who until then had shown his interest in the philanthropic work merely by the most withering sarcasms, and had proposed the Living Torches of Siemiradsky, or Makart's Entry of Charles V. into Antwerp as paintings particularly adapted for representation—here interposed energetically.

"Your readiness to make sacrifices grows more commendable every day, Mrs. Ferguson," said he.

"Dear me," she replied *naïvely*, "what great



sacrifice is there in having an old modern dress made over into a new historical one?"

"That is certainly no sacrifice," was Sempaly's calm answer, "but it is a decided sacrifice for a lady to present herself in a character which is so utterly unsuited to her style as Lady Jane Grey is to yours."

Mrs. Ferguson smiled like a pretty little beast of prey. "Ah," she cried, "perhaps you find that I do not possess enough of the *grâce touchante*, about which Mr. Barillat always has so much to say."

"Quite as little as the *grâce efficace*," said Sempaly gravely.

While the ladies were excitedly debating with each other, Sempaly found an opportunity of whispering a word in Barillat's ear. The latter gave a start, and was evidently pleased.

He then approached Countess Ilsenbergh. "I have another proposition to make, countess," he said; "I have thought of some one."

"Some newly imported American," cried Madame de Gandry, laughing, "or a model with suitable *grâce* and blonde hair."

"The ladies may rest assured that I would never take the liberty of proposing a model to them," protested Barillat. "No, no; the person I mean is an exceedingly charming young lady, Fräulein Stertzl. I had the honor of making her acquaintance night before last at Lady Julia Ellis'—she is an Austrian; you must have met her."



"I have not had that pleasure," said Countess Ilsenbergh stiffly.

"Ah! the young lady does not suit you?" murmured Barillat, somewhat disconcerted.

The Countess cleared her throat.

"*Mon Dieu!*" exclaimed Madame de Gandry, irritated by the superciliousness of the countess, "you really look at the matter too seriously. Why should not *la petite* Stertzl take part in our tableaux? I have heard that in Vienna they even call upon actors and actresses to assist them on occasions like this."

"That is quite another thing," observed Countess Ilsenbergh.

Madame de Gandry shrugged her shoulders, turning her attention to some other difficulty which had arisen, and Countess Ilsenbergh beckoned to her cousin Sempaly to join her.

"I am heartily tired of this whole business even now," she cried as he approached her. "In Austria I have taken part in charitable affairs often enough, and everything went on smoothly without trouble or annoyance—but here——"

"Yes, with us in Austria everything is decidedly better regulated," he observed with warmth.

"People are so rude here—every one wants to play first violin," said the countess.

"That is the consequence of the republican current prevalent here," Sempaly observed.

"And now, to crown all, this annoyance about



the Jane Grey picture. Why need Lady Henrietta choose just this time for having the measles?"

"English women are always inconsiderate," said Sempaly quite seriously.

"Have you met that young Stertzl girl yet?" asked the countess.

"I have."

"How does she look?"

"How? She is very pretty."

"And otherwise?"

"Otherwise she appears very much like *our* young girls. It is really a remarkable freak of nature! They say she is very agreeable, too. Princess Vulpini is quite delighted with her."

"Indeed! Barillat is bent on having her for Lady Jane Grey, and he may have his way then," cried the countess. "If Marie Vulpini will bring Fräulein Stertzl to me, I shall not object."

"What, Fritzi? You want Fräulein Stertzl to act in your tableaux, and you don't intend to invite her mother?" Sempaly replied, with a laugh.

"Of course I shall invite her to the performance, when I invite all the world and his wife, the whole of the plutocracy, and even the English clergy and the cosmopolitan artist crowd."

"With their families, Fritzi? You are a wonderful woman, I must say!"

"But the rehearsals are so exclusive," remonstrated his cousin with a sigh.

However, the time was growing short,



"Well, then!" said Countess Ilsenbergh, resignedly, and the next morning she politely called on Baroness Stertzl and her daughter for the purpose of asking Zinka to act in the tableau.

As she had quite as much tact as pride, she soon succeeded in reconciling not only Zinka, but also Cecil, reserved and touchy though he was, to the fact that the young girl had in reality been invited only at the last moment, in a dilemma and as a make-shift, to take part in the performance.

Cecil, however, never quite liked the idea of exhibiting his sister's beauty in a tableau, and only submitted because he did not wish to spoil Zinka's pleasure, as she looked forward with childish delight to playing "dumb comedy." He idolized his little sister, and could refuse her nothing.

The evening of the *fête* arrived. The performance took place in an immense hall, the walls of which were almost entirely covered with mirrors. From the ceiling, which was decorated with frescoes and rather quaint gilded scroll-work, hung a row of wondrously beautiful Venetian chandeliers.

In spite of its vastness, the hall was crowded. The guests highest in rank sat upon an extra carpet, in solitary grandeur, in front of the rest of the company, which was, unfortunately, rather mixed. Elegant and refined men leaned against the walls; the whole hall resembled a sea of glistening silk and sparkling jewels.

Princess Vulpini, who was helping Countess Ilsenbergh do the honors, hovered, graceful and



smiling, though rather pale and fatigued, on the borders of the crowd, and Countess Ilsenbergh herself received her guests with the royal dignity which was so becoming to her on grand occasions.

Few women knew how to wear their diamonds like Fritzi Ilsenbergh: even her haughty cousin Sempaly had to do her the justice to admit that.

The grand success of the evening was not the "*Proverbe*," by De Musset, in which Madame de Gandry and the versatile Barillat vied with each other in the production of nicely shaded points exactly according to the traditions of the Théâtre Français; not the operetta, in which Mrs. Ferguson looked ravishingly pretty, and sang the "*sentier couvert*" most charmingly; the success of the evening was not even the children's tableau, from out of which the little Vulpinis smiled like a nosegay of freshly plucked rose-buds. The grand success of the evening was the "Beheading of Lady Jane Grey."

Stertzl's face during this tableau was a tragedy. All the inner confusion of an executioner adoring his victim was to be read in it. And Zinka! With a sad smile which seemed to bridge her way to heaven, her bearing full of holy resignation and yet touchingly child-like fear, she thoroughly personified the poor guiltless creature, before whose loveliness the executioner casts down his eyes. A string-quartet played the Allegretto from Beethoven's Seventh Symphony. The pathetic musical background enhanced the poetry of the whole,



Softly, dreamily, the mournful allegretto vibrated through the hall, like a lullaby with which an angel sings to sleep a soul yet struggling with human sorrow, so that it may waken amid the peace of heaven.

The Villa Medici, which had been invited *in corpore*, together with its director, so that it might give its opinion on the artistic effect of the tableaux, decided that this performance far surpassed all previous representations of the painting. Countess Ilsenbergh, in view of its success, even forgot all the annoyances connected with it.

After the collection, which had an exceedingly brilliant result, the majority of the guests took their leave. Ilsenbergh, with a dignified smile, a picture of feudal philanthropy, had expressed his thanks to all those who had taken part in the performance, and had presented the ladies with tasteful bouquets. The *fête* had lost its *quasi* official character, and assumed that of an intimate *soirée*.

Zinka sat in one of the side-rooms, surrounded by a group of young Romans and Frenchmen. As she was one of those rare women who do not find the least pleasure in the attentions of men personally indifferent to them, she met the enthusiastic transports of these young gentlemen with the coolest nonchalance.

She had just asked for an ice, and Norina knelt as he presented it to her, and remained in that position while plying her with the most bombastic



flatteries. Zinka, unaccustomed to such southern obtrusiveness, made some little pettish remark, which had no effect, when Sempaly joined them and cried, in the abrupt manner which he generally displayed toward young men: "Do get up, Norina; don't you see that your homage is not appreciated?"

The prince started up in annoyance. Sempaly drew an ottoman to Zinka's side, and in five minutes had, as usual, completely monopolized her.

"My cousin is very much indebted to you," he said, in his singing voice. "You have saved the whole affair. To tell the truth, I am not very fond of such exhibitions in private life, but the Jane Grey tableau was really beautiful!"

"I liked the '*Proverbe*' very much, too. Madame de Gandry's acting was full of genius."

"Bah, I am blunted against such genius," he declared.

"Indeed?" she replied with a laugh, "it seems to me that you are generally *blasé*."

"What do you understand by being *blasé*?" he asked.

"What do I understand by it? Why, that state of weariness of the heart and soul which is the result of an uninterrupted life of pleasure, and which is one of the characteristic features of a man or woman of fashion."

"Hm," mused Sempaly, "something between illness and affectation, you mean?"

"Yes," she replied, "in short, it is a weak dilu-



tion of pessimism,\* adapted to the use of fashionable society."

Sempaly gave her a searching look. "Your definition is brilliant," he said. "I must make a note of it. But it does not apply to my state of mind; I am not *blasé*. Nothing leaves me indifferent; that which is false, or merely superficially good or pretty, irritates me; but when I meet with anything whatever that is beautiful, and noble, and genuine, no one can appreciate and admire it more than I."

In the mean time the "*prix de musique*" from the Villa Medici had seated himself at the piano, and, from a somewhat pretentious improvisation, had suddenly passed over into a waltz of Strauss. Countess Ilsenbergh made no objection to a little dancing, and soon several couples were revolving under the glittering chandeliers.

Sempaly rose. "May I have the pleasure?" he asked, slightly bowing to Zinka. They entered the ball-room together.

Zinka was distinguished by the agreeable peculiarity of not growing red, but rather pale, while dancing. Her movements were not lively and springy, but dreamily gliding. She looked incomparably lovely while waltzing.

The pleasure taken in dancing by cadets and youthful lieutenants, merely for the sake of twirl-

\* Orig. "Weltschmerz" (world-pain), an untranslatable expression applied to the spirit pervading the writings of Heinrich Heine and his school.—T.R.



ing around, had long ceased to exist for Sempaly. He danced only with persons in whom he was specially interested. That was generally understood.

"Hm," said Siegburg, shaking his head, as he joined General Von Klinger, who was observing the handsome couple from a window-recess; "seems to me my match with Fräulein Stertzl is not going to amount to anything after all."

"Have you changed your mind?" asked the general dryly.

"Not at all—on the contrary," replied he; "but I fear my chances are very poor for the present. Don't you think so?"

He looked straight into the old gentleman's eyes; the latter understood him and was silent.

"She dances charmingly—I never saw a girl dance better. How she holds her head!" he murmured. Suddenly a merry light flashed through his drowsy eyes: "Do look at Fritzi's face—such consternation! A veritable Niobe!"



## CHAPTER X.

SEMPALY grew more and more intimate with the Stertzls, was hand and glove with Cecil, did the honors of Rome for Zinka, and dined or lunched with the family two or three times a week.

Since the *fête* at the Ilsenberg's, Zinka had gone into society a great deal. She had become quite the fashion. The gentlemen were at her feet everywhere; the ladies all wanted to hear her sing folk-songs. She treated the gentlemen with great indifference, and was extremely courteous to the ladies, particularly to those of whom no one else took any notice, which made her still more popular.

Truyn's little daughter, a graceful romp, who regularly gave warning to her maid three times a week, wanted to learn everything, from Latin to aquarelle-painting, and could not agree with any of her teachers except Truyn himself, fairly worshipped Zinka, and, when with her, was as submissive as a lamb. Princess Vulpini rejoiced at Zinka's taming influence over her little niece, and called her young friend "a real *trouvaille*"; and Lady Julia Ellis, who had made the young girl's acquaintance two years before, at Meran, was proud of having been the one to introduce her in Roman society. Whenever Baroness Stertzl was not able



to go out, Lady Julia was always ready to chaperone Zinka, and on her Wednesdays the latter assisted her in receiving her guests and pouring out tea.

Countess Schalingen, the canoness, who had a passion for painting, and was full of the sentimental love of art which the French call *romance*, and which has not yet got beyond Winterhalter, pronounced Zinka "delicious," made excursions with her, visited all the antiquarians of Rome in her company, and finally painted her for Princess Vulpini on a hand-screen, with her head and bust wrapped in transparent flying drapery, rising out of the cup of a lily.

Before a fortnight had passed, an American had made inquiries as to her ancestors, and handsome De Crespigny had asked about her dowry. Norina made love to her behind Madame de Gandry's back, and the latter and Mrs. Ferguson paid her their homage by being madly jealous.

But all this did not turn her head in the least, nor did it even astonish her. She had been thus spoilt from her childhood; wherever she had shown herself until now, she had found friends. She was glad when people were kind to her; to tell the truth, however, it would have surprised her very much if this had not been the case.

Sempaly had called her "Botticelli-like," but had applied that adjective merely to her inner nature. Outwardly Zinka had no trace of the narrow-chested loveliness of the "primitives." She reminded one much more, in fact, of the pastel portraits of La-



tour, or even of a far later type of the eighteenth century—that of Princess Lamballe. She had never had the conventional pink-and-white complexion of a blonde, but even in her freshest youth was pale, with faint shadows under her eyes. Her naturally wavy hair varied in color from light-brown to red. A slight fluffy down softened the dividing-line between her hair and her forehead, without concealing the latter; and this gave her face an exceedingly open character. She was thin, without being angular, had long, slender arms, and narrow hands, which were at times rather red. Her imaginative temperament hovered between pensive dreaminess and merry exuberance of spirits; her walk was mostly free and light; sometimes—however, almost awkward, “like that of an angel dragging its wings,” Sempaly had once said. Her veiled and vibrating voice reminded one of the lower notes of an Amati violin. She was as impetuous as a boy, as graceful as a water-sprite, and as naïve as a child of six—the almost crude naïveté of a girl who has been brought up chiefly by men.

All her views bore the stamp of a dreamy unworldliness, an enthusiastic depth of feeling.

She had had English and French governesses, and had even spent a year at the Convent of the *Sacré Cœur*. But the greatest influence on her education had been exerted by General Stertzl, her uncle and guardian—a man as intelligent as he was peculiar, who had an antipathy to sentimental girlish friendships, as well as to the so-called



“routine” which a girl acquires by going into society too early. Zinka owed it to him that even Countess Ilsenbergh once dropped a word in her favor by saying: “One thing must be admitted: she is not in the least affected; she is as natural as any of ‘our’ girls.”



## CHAPTER XI.

"POOR Coralie!" the baroness often said with a sigh, "what a pity that she is not here. This is just what she would like!"

"Yes," Stertzl would reply, with his dry humor, "she has been too hasty."

Upon which the baroness would raise her eyes toward heaven.

Said Coralie was the elder and favorite daughter of the baroness. An unrequited affection for some hard-hearted nobleman had led her, three years before, to renounce the vanities of this world; but, as a worthy child of her mother, she had not forgotten, even in her grief and her despair, to choose as a refuge a convent in which the nuns were divided into "ladies" and "sisters;" the children confided to their care played *cache-cache*, instead of hide-and-seek, and the store-room was called *dépense*.

"Poor Coralie!" sighed the baroness, and then sat down at her writing-table to indite letters about the attractions of her stay in Rome to all her friends and relatives, particularly to her sister, Baroness Wolnitzky. Madame Stertzl was a type of that category of society, especially peculiar to



Austria, which, no one knows why, is designated by the term of "onion-nobility."

The "onion-nobility," as is well known, is a small branch of Austrian society, a step-sister of the aristocracy, a conglomeration of resigned noble "cast horses" and pretentious civil "remounts," who mutually make a convenience of each other. In these circles almost every man is a "baron," and every woman, without exception, a "baroness."

These people are generally poor, but "genteel" beyond conception. They reprove their children in bad French; they talk "society-German" through their nose with those of their own age in a drawling jargon; they give their guests nothing to eat, but seat them at tables adorned with family silver, and offer them the company of always the same old bachelor, who dyes his hair, and knows the "Almanach de Gotha" by heart. They are extremely well posted on "society" matters; they know exactly how many dozen of underclothing, etc., Fiffi X—— had in her trousseau, why the engagement between Steffi O—— and Mucki A—— has been broken off, etc., etc.

At the present time, however, the "onion-nobility," like many other excrescences of civilization, has been, for the greater part, swallowed up by liberal progress, *i. e.*, by finance.

Only a year ago, the baroness, standing by the grand staircase of the Opera House in Vienna, had watched the occupants of the first tier of boxes—at that time these were monopolized by the aris-



tocracy—as they passed in procession, in order to observe the details of the dresses of the nobility, and to listen to aristocratic gossip from aristocratic lips.

In Rome she lived in the heart of society. Her bliss knew no bounds, and she made, day by day, the most edifying progress in higher exclusiveness. Countess Ilsenbergh was soon far behind her in that respect. But she was most amusing when, in “society,” she happened to meet any of her countrymen or women who did not belong to the nobility.

Just that winter, there was staying in Rome a certain Herr Brauer, a middle-aged fop, with a very handsome wife, whom he liked to have admired by young aristocrats. Furnished with several letters of introduction, he, with his charming partner, moved about with much self-satisfaction in the outer circles, so to speak on the *boulevard extérieur* of society, without entertaining a suspicion of the actual length of the Rue des Martyrs. The baroness never ceased to express her surprise that “those people” were received anywhere.

She was always dressed with extreme elegance, she gave exquisite little dinners, she had the most correct coupé, the most comfortable landau, her coachman the smoothest “Roman emperor” face and the most conspicuous livery in the city. Her manners underwent a constant change, as she attempted to adopt in succession every peculiarity of all the lady-leaders of fashion in Rome.

She was exceedingly unpopular in society, and in



consequence was dreadfully bored at the entertainments which she frequented. Moreover, she had an unceasing anxiety with regard to her social position, and constantly suffered the torments of a person who tries to walk on tip-toe all the time.

Her sole real pleasure during this time, which she always called the happiest of her life, consisted in writing the above-mentioned letters to her friends at home, and especially to her sister, Baroness Woltitzky, in Bohemia. She needed a public for her triumphs, and, like all small natures, she knew no greater enjoyment than to awaken envy. Sometimes she would read her letters to Zinka, for she was very proud of her stilted style. Zinka felt somewhat disturbed by these enthusiastic effusions, which regularly closed with the words: "What a pity that you are not here. We should be delighted to see you!"

"Take care, mamma," she would say; "they may take you at your word, and come down here."

"What an idea!" the baroness would answer placidly, folding her epistle; "you know very well that they have no money."



## CHAPTER XII.

A HANDFUL of cabins sunk deep in the ground, thatched roofs covered with moss, green stagnant pools, here and there an old linden or a huge pear-tree, the crooked branches of which stand out black and hard against the pale-green winter sky; a pond, filled to the brink, on which three isolated geese are swimming about; a muddy road, along which passes a succession of creaking ploughs, drawn by rough, large-boned horses, a Bohemian village, and at its edge a dilapidated manor with a coat-of-arms over its warped portal, which is flanked on either side by a pig-sty and a dog-kennel. After the unpoetic Bohemian custom the *château*—a square building with a shingle-covered mansard-roof—stands on one side of the farm-buildings, and the drawing-room windows even look directly out upon a huge dunghill, which several maid-servants are turning over with pitchforks. This operation is being superintended by a short, thickset man in a weatherbeaten hunter's hat and a hunting-jacket, from the quilted silk sleeves of which the cotton-wool is bursting out in countless places.

He is smoking a pipe with a porcelain bowl, on which is painted an odalisque decorated with coins;



has a large, red face and purple ears; looks anything but aristocratic, and, with a constant chuckle, is cracking jokes with the girls who are at work on the dunghill.

It is Baron Wolnitzky, who, like countless others, had made himself quite prominent in the year 1848, and had since disappeared from the scene of the world's history without leaving a trace.

There is many a dry, fruitless tree, whose rusty foliage we see being drowsily smothered by the dust of September, of which we cannot believe that it once blossomed in the spring.

Baron Wolnitzky reminded one of such a tree. In the spring of 1848—the spring of a universal exuberance of blossoms—his soul too had bloomed. He had had patriotic ideas, and had written them down in rhyme, and his nation had honored him as a prophet—possibly because it needed an idol, perhaps because in those times of excitement it could no longer distinguish black from white.

He wore, in those days, a handsome Old Slavonic costume, with sleeves of an exquisitely eccentric cut, married a patriotic maiden, who dressed as exclusively as possible in the Slavonic colors—blue, red, and white—and, from that period, had always two youths, likewise in Slavonic costume, and armed with halberds, standing guard at the gate of his residence.

He was descended from a Polish family, which had emigrated several generations ago; his connections were by no means aristocratic, and the property



which he possessed he even owed exclusively to his father, who had called himself simply Wolnitzky, and had earned it as a master-baker.

In feudal times he would hardly have thought of bringing his doubtful patent of nobility to light once more, but in the era of liberty it might be of use to him. For the decoration of a democratic martyr such a document is quite good enough.

During the June revolution he and his wife fled, in some picturesque disguise, first to Dresden, and from there to Switzerland, where they spent some time at a *pension* in Geneva. Here he allowed himself to be made much of as a political fugitive, and horrified the landlady by his tremendous appetite, returning, some time after, to Bohemia, where the year '48, with its Slavonic party-leaders in their rich costumes, had been almost forgotten.

He retired to his estate and turned philosopher.

It is a well-known fact that philosophy has been, since the time of Diogenes, a haven of refuge for all shipwrecked pretensions.

He walked about the country in his shirt-sleeves, and played cards with the peasants; grew day by day more jolly, more common, more corpulent, and more of a glutton; and, if he ever thought of anything, it was involuntarily, in some oppressive dream which followed upon too heavy a consumption of national dainties.

His wife, a lady of robust figure, an excellent creature, who made herself rather ridiculous, bore, on the whole, a striking resemblance to the German



mother of the Regent of Orleans—that is to say, she had much sound common sense, and a sentimental nature; had no tact whatever, and a want of delicacy which amounted to cynicism; was very indiscreet, and a great talker. She had submitted, however, without a murmur, to the prosaic turn matters had taken, and had had a number of children, the majority of whom died. Three remained to her: two sons, who, cutting loose from the family traditions, served as infantry officers; and a daughter, in whom the romanticism of her nation flared up anew and with redoubled fanaticism.

She had been christened Bohuslava, but her name was generally shortened to “Slava,” which sonorous word signifies “fame” in the principal Slavonic tongues. Tall, like her mother, but thin, she had regular though somewhat monumental features, of which it was rumored that they resembled those of the Apollo of Belvedere.

She had had many suitors; but not one who met her wishes. About twenty-five years of age—having been born in 1848—she was passing this winter in the country unmarried and discontented, occupying herself in studying serious books, and sometimes receiving the visits of a jaundiced young Pole, whose admiration of her was boundless, and for whom she herself owned to entertaining a slight and condescending fancy.

Baron Wolnitzky is still standing by his dung-hill; the great black farm-dog, which until now has been barking uninterruptedly in front of its ken-



nel, has at last, in order to change the situation a little, jumped to its top, from which exalted position it continues to bark without ceasing. Everything is dripping with freshly melted snow. On all sides is heard the gurgling and splashing of running and falling water. The gray February twilight sinks upon the earth; everything looks dirty and cheerless.

Outside, the badly greased wheels of some vehicle are heard creaking along the road. A cart loaded with manure comes jolting through the gate.

"What's the news in town? Have you got the paper?" asks the baron of the driver, who, with the ear-lappets of his round cap tied under his chin, and clad in a badly smelling sheepskin, approaches him in order to kiss his elbow. "Yes, your honor, Herr Baron," replies the man; "there's a letter, too." With this he pulls a package, tied up in a red-and-white handkerchief, from the pocket of his sheepskin.

The baron examines the handwriting attentively. "Another letter from Rome," he murmurs, chuckling to himself; "I must take it upstairs directly, so that the women-folks will have something to talk about.

The "women-folks," *i.e.*, mother and daughter, were in the dining-room. At one end of the long table was laid a colored tea-cloth, on which stood, besides the tea-cups, etc., a kerosene lamp, and a bread-basket of rusty silver wire. The lamp smoked, and the whole table conveyed the same



cheerless, slovenly impression as the muddy village outside.

The baroness, in a tan-colored wrapper, which made her look more square than usual, without a cap, her scanty gray hair cut quite short, was searching for the keys of the pantry for the tenth time that day, on, under, and behind every piece of furniture, panting and puffing with the exertion as she did so. Bohuslava, meanwhile, sat at the table, bending over a volume of Mickiewicz, from which she read a poem aloud, with a harsh voice, and in somewhat rough Polish. A young man with a sharp-cut, yellow face and long black hair, wearing a Polish braided coat, a broad turn-down collar, and a brown and green changeable satin tie, sat beside her, and occasionally corrected her pronunciation of a word. It was her Polish admirer. He belonged to the species of teachers of languages with a romantic background, had his home in the nearest town, and was in the habit of coming out to the Wolnitzkys, who lived only a few stations off, every Saturday, to give Slava Polish lessons, and spend Sunday with the family.

When the union between these two patriots, which had for some time been secretly agreed upon, would finally take place, depended upon the settling of a mysterious lawsuit with the Russian government, in which the young Pole was engaged. His name was Vladimir de Matuschowsky, and his great-grandmother was a Potocka. When he was not giving lessons, he brooded over conspiracies,



"Is there nothing else for tea?" asked the baron, looking askance at the stale rolls in the bread-basket.

"No, the dogs ate up the cake," answered the baroness with equanimity. She happened just then to be under the piano, on all fours, looking for the keys beneath the pedal.

"You'll get a stroke of apoplexy if you stay there much longer," said Bohuslava crossly, but not anxiously, and without making the slightest attempt to assist the old lady.

At that moment a maid brought the much-sought-for keys on a bent and coppery britannia salver.

"Well, thank goodness!" cried the baroness. "Where were they?"

"In the dog-house, your honor, Frau Baroness; the puppies had carried them off."

In her love for dogs, too, the baroness resembled the famous Duchess of Orleans; she was always engaged in raising half a dozen pups, and the dog-house was known as a reservoir for all sorts of undiscoverable articles.

"The little rascals!" she cried, smiling contentedly at the new proof of sportive ingenuity shown by her four-footed darlings. "Give out the sugar, Clara."

"I've got a surprise for you—a letter from Rome," growled the baron, pushing the epistle, which smelt at the same time of patchouly and of damp sheep-



skin, toward his wife, after which he seized the rum-bottle in order to flavor his tea.

“Ah, from Rome!” cried the baroness; “that is splendid! Where are my spectacles? Oh! where *have* I put them?” she cried, looking around for them and slapping and feeling of herself all over, which gave a singular unsteadiness to her enormous corpulency. “Oh, here—I’m sitting on them! Well—well, then, children,” and she began to read the letter aloud:

“DEAR LOTTI: You must not be offended at my not writing to you oftener”—[the baroness looked up astonished over her spectacles: “Oftener? Why, she never wrote me as often in her life as she has from Rome.”]—“but you must remember in what a whirl we are living. Every day we have a dinner, two parties, and a ball to go to. We are ‘doing’ the Carnival with the cream of Roman society, and associate exclusively with them. To-morrow, we are going to dine with Princess Vulpini—she was a Truyn, sister of Count Truyn of Rautschin; day after to-morrow there will be private theatricals at the ——’s, etc., etc. Zinka has had an immense success. Among others Nicki Sempaly, brother of the prince, pays her such marked attentions——”

Here Wolnitzky interrupted his wife: “I should not have supposed that the old goose would be quite



so stupid!" he roared, and began to express his disapprobation by drumming on the flowery tea-cloth with his ten fingers.

"I can't understand, either, how Clotilde can permit that!" cried the baroness; "and still less do I understand Cecil."

"I'll give you a piece of good advice, Lottinka," said the baron, ironically: "go down to Rome and bring them to reason."

"With the greatest pleasure," replied the baroness, taking this sarcastic remark quite seriously; "but, unfortunately, we have not the money."

Upon this the letter was read to the end. Like all epistles from Baroness Stertzl to her sister Wolnitzky, it closed with: "What a pity that you are not here—we should be delighted to see you!"

The meal was over; the waiting-maid cleared away the tea-things, noisily rattling the cups and moving the chairs about; the baron withdrew, in order to play "bulka" with the peasants at the village-tavern; the others remained thoughtful and silent.

"I must confess I should like to go to Rome," said the baroness, as, with both hands, she brushed the bread-crumbs from her lap on to the floor; "and it would be quite pleasant to have some relations there, though I don't care in the least for their grand acquaintances."

"I don't see why we should keep aloof from society if we were once there," cried Slava angrily.



"Well, you could join them, you know," said her mother in a soothing tone, for she stood in great awe of her daughter: "But I should prefer to stay at home; for, *voyez vous, mon cher Vladimir*," she continued, turning condescendingly to her future son-in-law, "I don't feel at ease in company. If I can't put on my slippers in the evening——"

"*Mais, maman!*" exclaimed Slava, quite beside herself, "*vous etes d'une inconvenance!*"

The baroness stopped short, rather intimidated. All were silent. Not a sound was heard in the whole room save the crackling of the fire in the great greenish tile-stove, and the snoring of the old hound which was sleeping on the border of his mistress' wrapper.

"If we could only get rid of the Bernini," murmured the baroness, taking up the thread anew. The Bernini was a bust of Apollo, an heirloom descended to the baroness from her mother's family—reputedly a free copy by Bernini of the Belvedere Apollo. Every time that the Wolnitzky family found itself in a financial crisis, the "Bernini" was sent to a different art-dealer, from whom, after a certain time, it regularly came back unsold. A few days ago, this much-travelled Apollo—he had been in New York, London, and St. Petersburg—had returned from a year's visit at Meyer's in Berlin.

"*Tiens, Vladimir*, you have not yet seen it," cried Slava; "I must show you the bust."

"Is it the head to which you are said to bear such a striking resemblance? If so, it will interest me



extremely," exclaimed the young Pole, with a burning glance at handsome Slava.

"Take the lamp; the bust is in the drawing-room."

Carrying the lamp in advance of the two ladies, Vladimir escorted them to the drawing-room, a large, scantily furnished apartment, which was dusted only once a month. There, in a corner, on a marble pedestal, stood the bust of the beautiful god, evidently a copy of the Belvedere Apollo; but whether it was by Bernini was, to say the least, doubtful.

"The resemblance is, indeed, striking," cried Vladimir in ecstasy, looking alternately at the bust and at his *fiancée*. "Oh, it is a masterpiece; you ought never to let it go!"

"Well, I must say I should like very much to go to Rome," the baroness repeated, with a sigh.

Slava merely bit her lips in vexation.



## CHAPTER XIII.

“AND what shall we do to-morrow?” asked Sem-paly of Zinka almost every evening, when he met her in society, invariably radiant and charming. He had made it his task to help her find her “lost” Rome again, and to this task he devoted himself with an assiduity which was worthy of all admiration.

The disappointment which Zinka had experienced when, under the guidance of her loquacious cab-driver, she had had her first view of the ruins of the Imperial City, is a very common one. Almost every one feels it when, his head furnished with all the Rome-mysticism stowed away in modern literature, he sees for the first time those wondrous relics so closely penned in between bare, dirty, commonplace houses. And the disappointment is all the greater for those who come to Rome after spending some time in Venice or Verona. Rome has nothing of the seductive loveliness of the cities of Northern Italy. The architecture is heavy and gloomy, and the coloring in winter mostly an effectless mixture of an insipid gray and a dull, bluish green, reminding one rather of a delicately-tinted aquarelle than of a richly colored oil-painting. One longs in vain for the lagoons, glistening with gold



and azure, the fantastic stone lace-work of Venice, for the half-effaced frescos and the sunny amber halo of Verona.

"Rome, after the cities of Northern Italy, affects us like a grand choral of Handel after a couple of lovely nocturnes of Chopin," said Sempaly to Zinka one day. "The first impression is annihilating; in time, however, one tires of the nocturnes, but never of the choral!"

To this Zinka replied: "The choral is overpowered by so much grinding-organ music that I have great difficulty in hearing its tones at all."

But Sempaly answered with a laugh: "We'll talk about this again a fortnight hence."

In a fortnight Zinka threw two soldi into the Fontana di Trevi, to make sure of not being in Rome for the last time, and excelled even General Klinger, romantic though he was, in her enthusiasm for the City of the Caesars.

Sempaly had honestly contributed to her conversion. There could be nothing more entertaining and stimulating than to wander about with him among the nooks and corners of the beautiful City of Ruins. He was constantly remembering some new and curious object which he must needs show Zinka—now an artistic old basso-relievo, which had been pasted up on an orange-colored house directly over a tobacco-shop; now a marble heathen divinity in the court of some convent, on which the attempt had been made to attach an angel's wings to its shoulders. He would ride far out into the Cam-



pagna with her, and show her picturesque nooks in Trastevere. With reckless irony, he would attach an amusing, mocking remark to the most sacred objects. The halls of the Vatican, peopled by statues, in which the liberal Vicarage of Christ offers a refuge to pensioned heathendom, he called a Retreat for the gods; to the cathedral of St. Peter, known as "*la parocchia dei forestieri*,"\* he gave the name of the Catholic Grand Hotel.

At every sarcophagus transformed into a fountain, at every fragment of a bas-relief or picturesque heap of rubbish he would recall some characteristic historical event, now comic, now affecting, or would sometimes even invent one; and yet he never gave the impression that he was lecturing.

He had an exceedingly unassuming way of telling anecdotes—merely sketching them, but making them none the less striking. He never handed them about on a salver, with pretentious prolixity, but invariably dropped them negligently, as it were, from his pockets.

His knowledge of art was not very deep; but his artistic taste, like all his instincts, was remarkably subtle.

His information, however, on all subjects, was of the most desultory kind, and, as Charles Lamb has expressed it, no piece of his mental wardrobe was whole. But he draped himself in the rags of his knowledge, without even attempting to conceal their rents, with the most defiant grace.

\* The parish of the strangers.—TR.



Often Truyn and his little daughter would take part in these expeditions, and sometimes Cecil; but the latter only on days when his mother remained at home. His behavior during this peripatetic æstheticism, as he called their walks, was exceedingly characteristic of his whole nature.

Rather silent, and, as always, observing keenly, he walked along beside, or a little behind, Sempaly and Zinka.

From time to time he would dryly correct the dates of the former, to which Sempaly submitted with the most sublime indifference, and for which he returned thanks each time with royal courtesy—never without lifting his hat. Stertzl cared only for the vigorous renaissance-classists. The primitives, which Zinka loved, he smiled at as ecstatic caricatures. Guido Reni, the Italian Greuze, the Chopin among painters, for whom Sempaly had a small weakness, was actually repulsive to him. He declared that the head-dress of Beatrice Cenci was nothing but a wet bandage, and the whole picture a mere study, which Guido had probably painted after some insane woman in a madhouse. The somewhat mystic and enthusiastic phraseology which Zinka sometimes made use of in speaking of her favorite antiquities and works of art he smiled at in silence, but always good-naturedly. In reality, he despised all extravagant demonstrations of feeling, looking upon them as sentimentalism and affectation.

To his sister alone he showed himself very in-



dulgent, and when, while looking at a Francia, the tears would start to her eyes, or when she grew pale and quoted Shelley in speaking of Leonardo's Medusa—in Florence—he would at the most shrug his shoulders, and say, as he pulled her by the ear: “Zinka, you're crazy!”

In his sister, everything pleased him—even her want of common sense.



## CHAPTER XIV.

THE baroness had at length found lodgings which corresponded "approximately" to her wishes—a small palazzo on one of the side-streets of the Corso, "tastelessly furnished, indeed, but otherwise quite nice."

The "Palazetto M—" was a jewel in its way, with a plain, noble façade in renaissance style, and a court surrounded by arcades, in the middle of which, among red camellias, plashed a fountain. Several badly damaged statues stood about, among others a wounded Amazon, celebrated for its beauty, at the feet of which a rose-bush was blooming.

Zinka found this Amazon extremely picturesque, and had sketched it in her album from the most varied points of view, without ever comprehending the warning sadness of its glance. Poor Zinka! She had looked into the sun—she was blind.

How could Cecil permit this intercourse, growing more and more intimate day by day, between Sempaly and his sister?

Sempaly's older brother, Prince Sempaly, had been married ten years, but was childless. In consequence, the *attaché*, as heir presumptive to the estate, was in duty bound to marry a wife who was his equal in rank.



Did not Stertzl know this?

He knew it, but he did not care about it. He did not deceive himself in the least with regard to the fact that the marriage of a girl who was not noble to a Count Sempaly was not a daily occurrence; in fact, he would not have wished it to be so. He was no democrat, but his nature was originally a strangely conservative, old-fashioned one, equally far from cringing and from jealousy of caste.

That Sempaly should marry any other girl, not of the nobility, would certainly have seemed to him preposterous.

But Zinka—Zinka, she was something quite uncommon. He idolized her as only strong, elder brothers can idolize weak, much younger sisters. There was no social position of which he did not consider her worthy.

And when he saw Sempaly smiling down so tenderly, and at the same time so reverently, on his darling "butterfly"—this was Stertzl's name for Zinka—he rejoiced in his little sister's happiness, and had no doubt of its fulfilment.



## CHAPTER XV.

ZINKA was not romantic. For a long time no trace of a deeper feeling betrayed itself in her intercourse with Sempaly. One merry word chased the other, and from her eyes flashed the most mischievous archness. But by degrees a change came over her. Her whole manner grew softer and more tender, the sweetest melancholy crept even into her archness, and when she laughed, the tears often glistened in her eyes. Sempaly's visits at the Palazetto grew irregular. Sometimes he would stay away two or three days; then again he would make his appearance as early as twelve o'clock, cheerily invite himself to lunch, go to drive with the ladies, accept their invitation to an unceremonious family dinner, and if Zinka happened to look pale and depressed, would surpass himself in delicate attentions and thoughtful consideration, in order to call a cheerful smile to her lips. At times he assumed a melancholy mien—told her of his loveless youth, and allowed her to pity him. He told her of his elder brother, spoke of his many excellent qualities, and closed, as he shrugged his shoulders, with: "Yes, he is a splendid fellow, but—he has his peculiarities!"

When Zinka inquired into the particular nature of these peculiarities, he merely sighed. Some-



times he would add: "Well, I hope you will make his acquaintance one of these days, then you can judge for yourself."

Such things he always said in rather a dejected tone, and seemed afterward to regret having uttered them. Often, too, he would speak of some painting in the Sempaly Gallery in Vienna, or of some other rare treasure in the possession of his family, and remark that he was looking forward with great pleasure to showing them to Zinka.

He liked best to tell her about Erzburg; of this old castle, which had served the Sempalys for generations as a summer residence, he was particularly fond. In other respects he was totally free from family blindness. He coolly called Sempaly Palace an unhealthy barrack, abused the Sempaly horse-breeding, made sport of the Sempaly family nose, and praised mockingly only the legendary Sempaly Tokay wine; but when he began to speak about Erzburg, he grew quite enthusiastic.

Of the Asiatic luxury with which a part of the castle is furnished, though not always tastefully, he never spoke; altogether, he told Zinka more about the deficiencies of Erzburg than of its excellences—but in such a tender, deprecating tone! He described the great bare rooms in which for years he had watched for the White Lady, half in longing, half in fear; he told of the melancholy voice of the weathercock, of the rococo statues in the park, and of the sadly murmuring ponds strewn with pale water-lilies,



He admitted that those statues, affected in style as they were, had no artistic value; that those shallow ponds were quite unhealthy. But at the same time there glistened in his eyes, otherwise so full of mockery, an expression almost devout. Once, when Zinka had grown quite melancholy over his different descriptions, he took her hand and pressed it tenderly to his lips. "You must learn to love Erzburg," he murmured.

His manner toward Zinka was that of a man who has quite made up his mind to the step which he intends to take, but who for the moment sees no possibility of openly wooing the girl, whom, in his inmost heart, he already looks upon as his betrothed.

What was his aim in acting thus? What was he thinking of all this time?

I fancy he was thinking of nothing at all. He was just giving himself up to his inclinations. There are such sybaritic, selfish people, who allow themselves to drift on the stream of life, and disdain the exertion of giving their little bark any particular direction; mostly very happily organized, they reach some haven, without having met with any serious disaster by the way, and when, while gliding along on their passive, egoistic course, always smiling, always good-natured, they have run down some one else's ship of life, they cry, in their pernicious amiability, "Pardon me!" and remain firmly convinced that the accident was caused by chance, and not by their own carelessness.



## CHAPTER XVI.

IT was toward the end of February, shortly before the close of the Carnival. One day Truyn, who, with his young daughter, was about to call for Zinka to take a drive, saw standing in front of the Palazetto a cab with a gentleman's valise upon it. Stertzl's valet, a genteel-looking young man with hair parted in the middle, closely shaven upper lip, short side-whiskers, and an imposing fob-chain, was condescendingly exchanging a few remarks with the driver, and sleepily blinking at the sunshine.

The drawing-room, which Truyn and his daughter entered unannounced, was filled with a whitish-blue light, in which countless motes were dancing, shining in all the colors of the rainbow; in the middle of the room stood Zinka, resting both hands on a table and leaning over a magnificent basket of flowers. The rather quaint grace of her attitude, the elegant outlines of her delicate shoulders and bust, the love so charmingly portrayed in the smiling emotion which lit her sweet face, and withal the soft drapery of her lightly trailing dress, all these were engraved on Truyn's memory forever. A sunbeam played its brightest



mischievous in her hair, and around her whole figure there was a halo of sweet, fervent spring rapture.

The basket of flowers was, indeed, a masterpiece—a blooming *capriccioso* of lilies of the valley, gardenias, snowdrops, and blush-roses which seemed wafted together by romping spring breezes.

Stertzi, a pleased smile on his face, stood beside his sister the baroness, a picture of affected astonishment, a little farther off, with a visiting-card in her hand. Neither the brother nor the sister—he absorbed in the contemplation of Zinka, she in that of the flowers—had heard Truyn enter the room. Only the baroness had cried “Come in!” in answer to his knock, and now extended the tips of her fingers to him, as, with a motion toward the fragrant basket, she lisped: “Just see what extravagance!”

At this Zinka looked up and gave him a hearty welcome, in which Stertzi joined.

“It is a folly, a sin!” sighed the baroness anew; “such a basket of flowers costs a fortune—a single gardenia is worth. . . .”

Zinka pushed forward her under-lip in vexation, and Stertzi, with dry humor, interposed: “Don’t disturb Zinka’s illusions, mamma; for her that basket fell down from heaven. She wouldn’t listen if you told her that, after all, it was bought, like other flower-baskets, in the Via Condotti or in the Babuino. What do you say, count? Sempaly sent her this to console her a little for her brother’s absence. The reason is a comical one: always fine







now omitted to make any remark on the subject to Sempaly, it was because he foresaw that by so doing he would only irritate and aggravate him, without accomplishing any serious result; and if the general could not make up his mind to take the bandage from Stertzl's blinded eyes, the reason was that he, like countless other people, suffered from a profound disinclination to interfere in matters which did not concern him. The fear of committing an indiscretion is the only kind of cowardice which is looked upon by society as meritorious.



## CHAPTER XVII.

It is Shrove Tuesday. The horse of the most ramshackle *botta* wears a rosette behind its ears to-day, although, during the hours of the Carnival, one-horse cabs are treated as pariahs, and forbidden to drive on the Corso. Two-horse vehicles are decorated with garlands of flowers, and their horses bear bunches of feathers on their heads. The Piazza di Spagna is crowded with venders of flowers and *moccoli*, as well as with foreigners from all parts of the world, who drive bargains with the former energetically.

You see innumerable baskets filled with violets, roses, anemones, gilliflowers, and then again other baskets with indescribable greenish-gray bundles of herbs, Carnival ammunition, which have been doing service for three days, and remind one of nothing in the world but the bundles of twigs which are used in some countries for scrubbing the floors.

The venders of coral and of tortoise-shell goods call to the passers-by, "Buy, oh buy, è *Carnevale!*" and on the side-alleys—for from the principal streets and squares misery is banished to-day—the beggars crowd around the passers-by in greater numbers than at other times, with their mournful cry of "*Muojo di fame!*"



The whole Corso, on this day, wears for the last time its gorgeous Carnival attire. From every balcony flutters a gay drapery, countless stagings have been erected, and all the window-sills are decorated, some with colored cambric, some with hangings of brocade shot with gold.

Thursday, Saturday, and Monday, Zinka and Gabrielle have driven up and down the Corso with Count Truyn indefatigably and for hours, and have thrown flowers to all their acquaintances and to many strangers. To-day they have concluded to view the closing scenes from a window of Palazzo Vulpini, as the Carnival grows rather too stormy toward its end.

Every one who lives on the Corso takes advantage of the opportunity of paying off long-deferred debts of invitation, and offers the use of a window to as many of his acquaintances as he can accommodate.

At Princess Vulpini's a numerous company is assembled, consisting chiefly of Italian relatives of the prince. Mesdames Ferguson and Gandry have invited themselves, and Zinka and Gabrielle Truyn, as has been remarked, are also to join the party. The baroness has "tic-douloureux"—which prevents her from going out, and which no one regrets. At six o'clock, before the battle of the *moccoli* has commenced, the ladies and gentlemen assembled are to repair to the so-called "*Falcone*," a specially Roman restaurant, although they could really dine much better and more comfortably at



home. From there, it is agreed, they will go to the masked-ball at the Teatro Costanzi. This truly Roman Carnival programme has been arranged by Principe Vulpini, chiefly in honor of Countess Schalingen, who is greatly interested in the "local coloring" of Rome, and is enchanted with the plan. The princess is resigned; she takes no interest in the Roman local coloring, and is very suspicious of Italian national cookery and masquerade jokes.

Three o'clock! Baskets of flowers as well as whole boxes full of pretty little *bonbonnières* stand in readiness invitingly in all the windows.

The little Vulpinis, who are to occupy the large double window in the middle of the main reception hall, have just been brought in by their timid English governess in black silk. They hop about on one leg, pull each other's hair, and the like, in their impatience and happy anticipation. When the governess reproves them in a low voice for these misdemeanors, the eldest replies, in remonstrance, "*Ma é Carnevale!*" upon which all the guests laugh, and the governess is silent. All are assembled.

Mesdames de Gandry and Ferguson both look very pretty and picturesque; the former wears a fez; the latter has gracefully draped an Oriental shawl woven with gold about her head in honor of the Carnival, which permits becoming eccentricities of toilet and makes war on conventional head-coverings.



From the windows into the carriages, from the carriages to the windows, fly the fragrant projectiles, small *bonbonnières* from Spillman and Nazzari whiz between them, and tiny, gay-colored scraps of paper, softly fanned, tremble through the air like colored snow.

From the Piazza di Venezia comes the din of a noisy military band. The processions of maskers mingle with the carriages.

One of the most animated windows on the Corso is, doubtless, the children's window in the Palazzo Vulpini. Zinka stands in the midst of the little group, the superintendence of which she has undertaken at the special entreaties of the tiny folk, who are very much attached to her.

She vies with Gabrielle in laughter and joyous exclamations, and in the midst of her own pleasure still finds time to pay the timid English governess all sorts of little attentions, and pin a pretty little bunch of lilies of the valley to the bosom of her black silk dress, which smells of camphor.

What naturally interests the children most of all is Norina's drag, because they are on friendly terms, not only with the prince himself, who is driving, but with all the gentlemen on the coach—Truyn, Siegburg, Sempaly. Whenever the drag, drawn by four cream-colored horses, passes by, the little Vulpinis jump for joy, and all raise their shrill voices at once, so that it sounds like the twittering in a large bird-cage; and the gentlemen bow, laughing, and with gallant skill throw countless nosegays



into the windows of the Palazzo Vulpini. But the fairest of the gifts of flowers, fall, without question, to Zinka's share this day. The floor around her is strewn with gilliflowers, violets, and roses. In her hand she holds a large bunch of the latter. It was Sempaly who threw it. "Oh, oh!" says Madame de Gandry, withdrawing from her window to rest a while from the fatiguing scene, and refresh herself with a glass of wine. "Ah, mademoiselle," she cries, scanning the superabundance of flowers heaped up around Zinka with envious glances, "you have been fêted like a prima-donna!"

Zinka nods. Then, bending with humorous pity over her hat, which the impetuosity of the Carnival had torn from her head, she says, restoring order to the feathers upon it, "My poor hat will be glad when Ash Wednesday comes!"

"Charming, Marie—such a Roman Carnival is charming!—a never-to-be-forgotten scene!" cries Countess Schalingen, likewise retiring into the *salon*. A true Austrian nature, she is ever ready for enthusiasm.

"Bah!" replies the Principe testily; "since the new government has come in, no one takes part in our Carnival but foreigners and *gamins*."

The "*Berberi*" have dashed past, the endless procession has begun anew, but without exciting particular interest. The crowd in the street is diminishing, and Sempaly, Truyn, Norina, Siegburg, and the general have, by previous appoint-



ment, come to the Palazzo Vulpini to accompany the ladies to the Falcone.

The children have been kissed and sent away to their dinner. Gabrielle shed a few tears at not being allowed to join the grown people, and Truyn is rather unhappy at the discontent of his little comrade. Zinka offered to stay with the children to console her friend Gabrielle, but this was not permitted.

"There would be too many who would wish to follow your example," said Princess Vulpini, rather out of sorts, for this expedition to a Roman restaurant is growing more and more distasteful to her.

They have agreed to go on foot, and are preparing for the start. Thanks to the long discussions which have taken place, they have missed the real lull of the Carnival, the time preceding the battle of the *moccoli*. When the little company reaches the street, the crowd, which had thinned considerably, is again increasing. A gray veil seems to sink down from heaven, twilight is beginning. The gay combustible draperies have been taken down from windows and balconies; the Carnival is doffing its ball-dress. The first of the little reddish flames glisten like fire-flies in the dusk, and are immediately bombarded with a hail-storm of stony *confetti* and bunches of herbs, mostly picked up in the street. "*Fuori, fuori!*" resounds monotonously; then again, "*Senza moccolo vergogna!*"

The death-agony of the Carnival has begun.



The Austrians do not like the situation in the company of ladies, whom they can neither guard from the pressure of the crowd nor render deaf to the very low jests of the populace.

At last they have worked their way out of the Corso, and have lost each other in the dark side-streets. Some have gone by way of the Via Madalena, the others over the Piazza della Rotonda, and have finally reached the Falcone. The dress of the ladies shows the effects of the crowd. Princess Vulpini looks unhappy.

The Falcone is a restaurant without the slightest pretensions, where the waiters wear white jackets instead of dress-coats. The prices are low, the "*risotto*" is famous. Vulpini orders an Italian dinner to be served in one of the upper rooms. Suddenly Truyn exclaims, in an anxious tone: "Why, where are Zinka and Sempaly?"

"They have probably lost time in talking," says Madame de Gandry, with a slight curl of the lip, as she leans back in her chair and takes off her gloves; "People always walk slowly when they have a good deal to say to each other."

Truyn knits his brows: "I am very much afraid those two have got into the thickest of the crowd, and have not been able to get through. I have disliked the idea of this expedition from the first. I cannot understand, Marie, how such a thing could enter your head."

"My head?" replied his sister, deprecatingly and with a peculiar expression; then she is silent. He



knows perfectly well that she is as innocent of planning this *partie de plaisir* as the angels in heaven.

“*Mais qu’avez-vous donc ?*” grumbled the prince, pouring enormous quantities of Parmesan cheese into his soup, while Mrs. Ferguson is continually complaining that she is dying of hunger—which is, to say the least, remarkable, in view of the loads of bonbons which she has disposed of during the afternoon. Madame de Gandry orders a number of Parisian dainties of which the Falcone has never heard.

Countess Schalingen praises the Italian dishes and regrets not having any appetite. Truyn and the general again and again turn their eyes anxiously to the door. Zinka and Sempaly do not appear. Truyn finds it more and more impossible to conceal his anxiety.

“I cannot understand how you can get so excited, my dear count,” says Madame de Gandry with a perfidious smile; “even if Fräulein Stertzl has been detained a little, she is safe under the protection of Count Sempaly. If she had been confided to some one who was less reliable, with whom she was less intimate—then, indeed, I could understand——”

Truyn passes his hand nervously over his gray hair, and murmurs in his mother-tongue: “That woman will be the death of me yet!” after which he continues to reproach his sister.

And another quarter of an hour passes. In spite of the rather slow service, the dessert has been reached—not a trace of Zinka and Sempaly.



"I begin to feel seriously alarmed," says the princess. "I fear Zinka may have fainted in the crowd."

Countess Gandry draws down the corners of her mouth sarcastically, and says: "That might have been the wisest thing for her to do under the circumstances."

Truyn hears the abominable insinuation, and bites his lips furiously.

At that moment the door opens, Zinka and Sempaly enter the room—she with calm, smiling eyes, Sempaly with a scowl on his face.

"Thank heaven!" cries Truyn. "What has happened?" asks the princess, while Truyn sets a chair for Zinka beside his seat at table.

"What has happened?" Sempaly cries in an angry tone; "the most natural thing in the world—we got into the crowd, and could not get out!"

"That is singular," remarks Madame de Gandry with an ugly smile; "we all got through."

"You may remember, madame, that we were the last of the party; we had hardly walked twenty steps, when the crowd in front of us began to get blocked. We hastened on; we wanted to get through at any price. I could have succeeded by myself, but with a lady—suddenly a disagreeable altercation arose—curses, blows, stabs followed—pah, I can't express to you what a horrible sensation it gave me to be there in the street with a lady, with a young girl."

"Fräulein Stertzl seems to have taken the matter



much more coolly than you, Count Sempaly," remarks Madame de Gandry maliciously; "one does not receive the impression that the adventure has alarmed her."

"Fräulein Zinka was very brave," replies Sempaly.

"Why, what should I have been afraid of?" asked Zinka, opening her eyes very wide, with the simplicity of perfect innocence. "It was Count Sempaly who had the responsibility, and not I."

Madame de Gandry smiles sarcastically. "But we shall have to leave now," she says, "if we want to get to the Costanzi to-night."

A general moving of chairs ensues, a confused universal attempt among the gentlemen to render assistance, during which no one can find the right wrap for the right lady.

Princess Vulpini remains in her place. "I shall not stir from here," she cries with considerable energy; "I shall not take Zinka to the Costanzi. We will wait till she has eaten her beefsteak, and then I shall drive her home. I wish you all much pleasure!"

Zinka eats her beefsteak with the greatest equanimity and the most praiseworthy appetite—is charming, affectionate, and entertaining; and has not the faintest suspicion that her name will be on everybody's lips the next day.

But Truyn is very pale. He has distinctly heard Countess Gandry whisper to her friend: "After this, the banns will surely have to be published."



## PART II.—LENT.

### CHAPTER I.

“AH! I’m glad to find you in,” cried Truyn the next morning, as he entered Sempaly’s sitting-room, where the latter, with a book beside his cup, was just finishing his after-luncheon coffee. It was in the Palazzo di Venezia, where he occupied an official apartment.

“It is very good of you to look in upon me; I wanted to show you my new ‘Francia;’ the dealer who sold me the picture assured me that it *was* a ‘Francia,’ but—you look preoccupied? What has brought you here?”

“I merely wanted to ask you if you would like to go with us to-day—hm—to Frascati?”

“To Frascati—in the afternoon—what an idea!” exclaimed Sempaly, astonished. “But I could not join you, at any rate. I am going to the Palatine with the Stertzls at three o’clock.”

“Ah!” said Truyn, and his face assumed a very grave expression.

“May I offer you a cup of coffee?” asked Sempaly.

“No, thank you,” replied Truyn dryly. He



was evidently restless, and took up and examined several of the bric-a-brac articles scattered about, in order to calm himself. By accident he also laid his hand upon the book which Sempaly had been reading. It was the "Essays of Elia," and on the fly-leaf was written, in large, firm characters:

"In kind remembrance of a very serious quarrel.

"ZINKA STERTZL."

"The little girl lost a wager to me not long ago," remarked Sempaly in explanation; "there is another one pending between us, which is to be decided to-day at the Palatine Gardens."

Truyn closed the book energetically and put it down. Then, leaning his elbow on the table, beside which he had seated himself, and fixing on Sempaly a serious and penetrating look, he said: "Do you intend to marry Fräulein Stertzl?"

Sempaly started. "What are you thinking of?" he cried; but as Truyn did not answer, and merely continued to look at him in silence, he suddenly assumed a stubborn mien. Turning his darkly glowing eyes upon Truyn with an angry, defiant expression, he cried brusquely: "And what if I do?"

"In that case I hope that you may not be wanting in the energy needed to carry out your intention," said Truyn; "for to stop half-way in such cases is a crime." He breathed hard and kept his eyes cast down.



Instead of lighting up, Sempaly's face grew thoroughly dark. He had counted upon vehement opposition; brought face to face with his cousin's calmly acquiescent, even encouraging manner, he found himself in the position of a man who, having strained all his muscles for the purpose of lifting a heavy piece of iron, suddenly becomes aware that he has a piece of pasteboard, light as a feather, to deal with. He lost countenance completely.

"Hm!" he exclaimed angrily. "You really talk as if the question were one of dancing a german. The thing is absolutely *impossible!* What are we to live on? I have used up my own property long ago; my brother, if I were to take such an unprecedented step, would cut off my allowance entirely, and Zinka is not of age yet. I might, indeed, sell *grasso lucido* to support my wife—which would, it is true, have the immense advantage that my mother-in-law would disown me. Or do you propose that I should allow myself to be supported by Madame Clotilde Stertzl during Zinka's minority?"

"Well," said Truyn very calmly, "if you take so sensible a view of the impossibility of a marriage with Zinka, your conduct toward her is flatly inexcusable."

Truyn was still seated at the small table, upon which stood the delicate coffee-service, while Sempaly, with both hands in his pockets, angry, like all those who feel themselves in the wrong, paced up and down the room, pushing the furniture hither and thither in his irritation.



"I really don't know what ails you!" he at last cried peevishly, suddenly stopping before Truyn. "Stertzl has never objected to my conduct, and he certainly stands in a nearer relation to Zinka than you!"

Truyn changed color slightly at this attack, but he regained his self-control immediately.

"Stertzl, in spite of his matter-of-fact outward manner, is an idealist, who would be glad to fetch the stars from the sky for his sister," he said; "he has never doubted for a moment that you have the most serious intentions toward her."

"That is not possible!" cried Sempaly indignantly.

"It is the case, however," Truyn assured him. "The deluded man happens to be of the opinion that his sister is good enough for anybody."

"And in that he is right!" exclaimed Sempaly—"perfectly right; but the compulsion under which my circumstances place me, the duties which I have inherited——"

He had seated himself on the step of one of the deep window-recesses, and, with his elbows on his knees, his cheeks between his hands, looked, brooding, straight before him. He continued:

"Permit me, however, to ask a question. What has induced *you* to interfere in this affair?"

"I have had the matter at heart for some time," was Truyn's reply; "but that which has absolutely forced me to speak of it to you to-day is the fact that last night, before you reached the Falcone,



Mesdames Ferguson and Gandry took the liberty of making various remarks which convinced me that your continued attentions to Zinka are beginning to injure her reputation."

"Pshaw, if you want to care for what every old washerwoman says!" cried Sempaly testily. Then he made a few more remarks, in which the words "responsibility . . . fidelity to a trust committed to him by God," etc., were prominent. An expression of icy scorn came into Truyn's handsome face, and after listening awhile he suddenly interrupted Sempaly with:

"No subterfuges, I beg of you! The question is simply this: Do you love Zinka?"

The *attaché* contracted his brows. "Yes," he answered shortly, almost angrily.

"Well, and you have not the courage to burden yourself with the annoyances which a marriage with her would bring upon you?"

Sempaly remained silent.

"Then, my dear fellow," continued Truyn, "there is but one thing for you to do, which is, to break off your intercourse with Zinka as delicately, but at the same time as speedily, as possible."

"That I cannot and will not do!" cried Sempaly stamping his foot.

"If, within three days, you have not taken the necessary steps for being transferred to some other post, I shall feel obliged to give a hint either to Stertzl, or—to your brother—whichever you like best!" said Truyn firmly. "And now good-by!"



“Good-by,” replied Sempaly, without stirring. Truyn went toward the door. On the sill he turned and said, with some hesitation: “Don’t be offended, Nicki; I could not do otherwise. Remember one thing: duty is a bitter morsel with a good after-taste!”



## CHAPTER II.

"POOR girl! Poor, sweet child!" muttered Truyn to himself as he descended the gray stone staircase of the Palazzo di Venezia. "Now is the time to talk about inherited responsibility, of the force of circumstances, of political economy, now! Good heavens!" He lit a cigar, but suddenly threw it away impatiently. "Bah—to meet a girl like Zinka—to be loved by her, and—to be free——!"

He walked quickly out into the square. The concierge, who stood at the door, was surprised that the count, usually so courteous, paid no heed to his respectful greeting on this occasion. As long as he had known him, this had never happened before.

He was very peculiar, this young, gray-haired Count Truyn. Grown up amid the happiest family relations, he had, while still quite young, committed the great mistake of marrying, against his inclination, the handsome Princess Gabrielle Zinsenburg, who, several years older than he, had in cold blood staked her all on her last card to force him into an alliance with her. She was a superficial and heartless woman, and he could never accustom himself to the hollow worldliness of their married life. A few years after the wedding they separated by mutual agreement. He had given her



his name; she let him keep their child. His life was desolate. He had a great, noble heart, and could give it to no one, but was forced to carry it about in solitude in his breast, where it grew heavier and heavier as time wore on. His love for his child, much though it occupied him, did not suffice to give his inner life the nourishment which it needed. His whole inner nature was tinctured with a bitter, unsatisfied feeling. Having lived in foreign countries more or less for years, his ideas had become enlarged, and he had divested himself entirely of many strictly Austrian prejudices. Nevertheless, he was always considered reactionary at home, because he passively voted with his party. He was not reactionary, but he was utterly indifferent to all political exertions. Sometimes he smiled at the want of consideration exhibited by the Lefts, sometimes at the disturbances among the Rights, and the perfecting of the constitution he regarded, in his inmost heart, as a thankless task.

He was not satisfied with the present order of things in general; but he believed that, in order to cure the existing serious defects, it would absolutely require a thorough regeneration of the human race. The human race, however, has not the least desire to be regenerated; its members find their chief pleasure in shouting at one another, and mutually laying their faults at each other's doors.

He did not care to shout. Instead of relieving his oppressed heart by sonorous humane theories, he sought consolation in acts of unlimited charity.



Sempaly's undecided, groping manner had directly repelled him to-day. "How is it possible," he asked himself, "for a man to have at the same time such warmth of feeling, and so little heart? He is absolutely the most selfish creature I have ever met with—an Epicurean in feeling, through and through, and with just about enough heart for his own amusement!"



### CHAPTER III.

THE wager pending between Zinka and Sempaly was not decided that afternoon. Sempaly did not go to the Palatine, but sent Zinka a short note of regret at the last moment. Truyn's words had made a very strong impression upon him, even though he would hardly acknowledge to himself that this was the case. However he might struggle against it, nothing remained to him but to seriously face the situation.

Have himself transferred, give up all his pleasant dallying habits of life—the idea was insupportable to him! It seemed to him as if, while he had been lying in a delicious slumber, his head full of sweet dreams, some one had attempted to roughly awaken him. He felt no inclination to wake up, to rub the dreams from his eyes. Was there really nothing else left to him? True, Truyn had placed one alternative before him: he could, if he had possessed the requisite energy, have turned the sweet, vague dream into a wondrous, warm living reality. His whole being vibrated, as in a mad transport of joy, while this thought hovered caressingly around his heart.

He was no longer at the age when young men commit follies, when they hope to convert noto-



rious *café-chantant* singers to a moral life, or wish to marry their sister's governess, who is twelve years their senior. If he considered the eventuality of a marriage with Zinka at all, it was because he knew that his feeling for her was no vain, transient delusion, but that it had taken root in his inmost being. All the pleasures of the world had been accessible to him, and he had tired of them. That which sufficed to procure for other young men of his acquaintance the amount of excitement which every one needs in order to keep up his interest in life merely filled his very delicately organized nature with disgust. For several years past life had appeared very insipid to him, until he made Zinka's acquaintance. Then it seemed to him as if the loveliest spring fairies had suddenly fluttered into his cold, desolate soul, and had there called forth by magic all sorts of blossoms, and carried on their mad, charming pranks. He felt once more the "sweet pain of existence." . . . And should he now arbitrarily condemn all those lovely blossoms to death?

"Cease my intercourse with her—have myself transferred? No, a thousand times no! I cannot and will not do it!" he muttered angrily, always coming back to the same point: "What business is it of Truyn's? Who is he, that he should have the right to order me about?" he cried vehemently.

But when he wanted to make up his mind to just carry on his intercourse with Zinka as heretofore, to enjoy her smiles, her charming ways, her beauty,



without desiring anything further, as he had done until now, a strange sensation suddenly came over him. He felt that he could do so no longer. His heart, until now enjoying in silence, had learned to speak and to demand. To endeavor to quiet it by so hollow a delusion would be as futile as to attempt to quench a terrible thirst by the dew-drop in the calyx of a rose.

He suddenly loved her madly, passionately!

It was particularly the so-called interesting women of whom he had always tired so quickly. Most of them were like brooks, made turbid by the rain, the shallowness of which was not immediately perceptible only because they had lost their clearness and purity in the thunder-storms of life. Zinka, however, reminded one of a beautiful mountain-lake, the waters of which are so clear that, from its banks, every pebble at the bottom can be distinctly seen. But the farther one goes out upon it, the less transparent, the more mysterious the waters become, though without being dimmed; only on account of their increasing depth. And at last they are so deep that, in spite of their crystalline purity, one can see the bottom just as little as one can penetrate to the depths of the blue sky above us. It seemed to him as if there were hidden in the lake, just there at its greatest depth, a wondrous treasure, which one alone, one whom God favored, was privileged to raise.

How he longed to fathom that beautiful lake! She seemed just made for him. He had never



had a dull moment while with her; she satisfied his head as much as his heart. All the incongruous contrasts of her personality enchained him. He once said of her that she was "like a small compendium of womanliness," there were so many different qualities comprised in her. The keenness of thought which sometimes suddenly flashed out from her child-like merriment, the witty exuberance of spirits which was often followed by moods of yearning dreaminess, her little capricious egotisms, and her noble self-forgetting readiness for sacrifice, the spontaneous grace of her motions, the music of her melting voice. . . .

Should he really? . . . . No, it could not be; Truyn was right; he must go away from Rome—the sooner the better. He took his hat and left the house, to call on the ambassador in the Palazzo Chigi, and make the necessary arrangements with him. His excellency was not at home. Much annoyed, he went to the Hunting Club, lost several games of *écarté*. . . . he was out of sorts. He looked at his watch again and again, as if he were waiting for something; he grew more and more restless from minute to minute. . . .



## CHAPTER IV.

“’Tis spring once again; ’tis the beautiful May:

Trees now their garments of blossoms are weaving.

Thou o’er my life, love, alone dost hold sway.

Freely I gave it, myself to thee giving;

Ay, plunge in my bosom thy knife, O my lover—

What though it pain me, ’tis nothing to me—

And that thou seekest, e’en there thou’lt discover,

A heart that e’er has loved only thee!”

These simple words, in the Roman dialect, sung to a very mournful melody, vibrated through the air from the drawing-room windows of Palazetto M——, as Sempaly passed it that same evening. In order to change the current of his thoughts, he had concluded to make some calls. His way did not take him through the quiet side-street on which the Palazetto stood, but he could not refrain from making a *détour* in order to pass it. It was a warm night. Softly and insinuatingly the tones floated down to him. He knew Zinka’s voice, and recognized in the song which she was singing one of the melancholy “*stornelli*” in which the peasants of the Campagna give vent to their sorrow. The song ceased. He was going on his way, when the soft silence was broken by another, still sweeter, still more touching:



"Would'st I were dead? Oh, death is sweet, believe me,  
Since 'twas thy hand the poisoned cup did give me,  
And, love, my tomb shall be within thy bosom!"

The tender words were borne on a solemn, minor strain, like a branch of fading spring-blossoms on the waters of a sadly moaning stream.

He turned. He listened intently. The song closed with full, long-drawn tones. It seemed to him as if he could have given anything in the world to hear it once more, even if it were only the last line:

"La sepoltura mia sarà il tuo seno!"

Then he heard Zinka speaking. He felt annoyed that he could not distinguish her words. He grew impatient. Good heavens! why was he tormenting himself down there?

. . . . .

To his astonishment, he was met by Stertzl as he entered the drawing-room.

"What! back already?" he cried, as he cordially extended his hand to him after greeting Zinka.

"Yes, Arnsperg could only spend two days in Naples," replied Stertzl; "I was very glad to see him, but——well, I must be getting rather old, otherwise I could hardly feel so glad to be at home again," with which he drew his sister toward him, and passed his hand lightly over her pretty golden head.

This brotherly caress was enough to increase



Sempaly's excitement. "I don't wonder that you love your home," he muttered. At that moment the baroness entered the room, an opera-cloak over her shoulders, smelling-bottle and handkerchief in hand, and, as usual, ultra-genteel in her manner. "Not ready yet, Zenaïde? . . . Ah, you here, my dear Sempaly? . . . *Voilà qui est gentil!*" giving him the tips of her fingers to kiss. "We were quite anxious about you, because you excused yourself from our walk so suddenly. Zinka was afraid you had an attack of Roman fever," she said affectedly.

"Zinka has a vivid imagination, inclining toward the horrible," observed Stertzl with a smile.

"I certainly thought you must have some very good reason for excusing yourself," cried Zinka hastily, and somewhat embarrassed.

Sempaly looked straight into her eyes. "I had imposed an Ash-Wednesday penance upon myself—that was all," he said tenderly, in a low tone.

"In order to finish your penance you ought to go to Lady Dalrymple's with us now," proposed the baroness.

"Oh, I beg of you, absolve me from that; I had looked forward with such pleasure to a quiet evening to-night."

"And I too," said Zinka. "I am heartily tired of all parties and routs. A rout always seems to me like a social guard-mounting, at which so and so many regiments of fashion file past.

"Let us have a holiday, mamma," entreated



Stertzl; "remember, it is Ash-Wednesday, and we are Catholics."

"I had my scruples, but the Duchess of Otranto is going," his mother replied.

Sempaly, however, with imperturbable gravity, assured her that the Duchess of Otranto was by no means looked upon as a standard by Roman society; and therefore she concluded, in accordance with the wishes of the young people, to remain at home, and withdrew with the remark that she would write some letters before tea.



## CHAPTER V.

THE majority of men have sentiment only in their head, while it is well known that women have sentiment in their whole body. Sempaly, in this respect, had the organization of a woman. He was full of sentiment, even to the tips of his fingers, and, as a Frenchman of genius has expressed himself untranslatably, "*il avait les sens poète.*" In consequence of this, the most trivial, the most purely external things were wont to excite him, either very agreeably or very disagreeably. One unpleasant detail, however minute, sufficed to mar his enjoyment of that which was grandest and noblest. He would not have comprehended the beauties of "Faust" if he had made the acquaintance of that masterpiece through a worn volume from a circulating library.

As the baroness had withdrawn, there was no longer anything to mar the pleasure which he derived from being with Zinka.

Stertzl had taken up his paper again; Zinka, by Sempaly's request, resumed her place at the piano. As usual, she sang and played without notes, her head slightly bent over the keys, with half-closed eyes, gazing dreamily before her. The somewhat gloomily furnished apartment, with its tapestry covered walls, its charming confusion of various



*bibelots*, pots of broad-leaved plants, Japanese lacquer-work, and comfortable irregular furniture, formed a harmonious background to her white rococo figure.

Through the rose-colored shade of the single lamp, the light trembled, mysteriously softened; a sort of melodious color-mezza-voce pervaded the room. The air was filled with the odor of violets, roses, and gilliflowers, and the sweet melancholy of the fragrance exhaled by the flowers mingled with the sadness of the love-songs so full of plaintive longing. Sempaly's whole being vibrated with a delicious exaltation which few men could have comprehended.

Zinka sang one after the other of the charming "*stornelli*" at his request; her voice grew more and more tender.

"Don't sing too much; you will tire yourself," warned Stertzl.

"Only one more song—the one I heard from below," begged Sempaly.

She sang:

"La sepoltura mia sarà il tuo seno."

Trembling, the words fell from her lips. Her hands slid from the keys. Then Sempaly took those soft, warm child-hands into his: a delicious giddiness, an unmeasurable joy came over him as he touched them. "Zinka, do you feel anything of that which speaks from your voice to-night?"

Her eyes meet his—she closes them quickly, as



if she had suddenly looked into a dazzling light, and she starts, as one would start at an overwhelming happiness. The answer is still hovering on her lips, when the door opens; the Italian servant calls out some undistinguishable jargon, and in walks, followed by her daughter and her Polish admirer, Baroness Wolnitzky.

“Ah, how glad I am to find you at home!” she cries. “We counted on your not being out on Ash-Wednesday. How do you do, Zinka!”

Zinka seems petrified. Mamma Stertzl, at the sound of that loud, coarse voice, has hastened in from the next room. “Charlotte!” she cries, in broken accents; “Char—lotte,—you—here!”

“I’ve taken you by surprise, haven’t I, Clotilde. Yes, things often happen when you least expect them; we arrived to-day, at three o’clock, and we called on you this afternoon, but didn’t find you in, so we concluded to come this evening. It’s late, eh? Well, I, for my part, should have been here long ago, but Slava insisted on our dressing up—for such near relations, what nonsense!—but I don’t like to contradict her, she gets out of sorts so easily; and so I did dress up.”

With this the baroness, after noisily kissing her sister and niece, drops clumsily and heavily, without invitation, upon a very small chair.

She has indeed “dressed up.” On her head, with its short, gray hair, is balanced a black head-dress, the lappets of which hang coquettishly about her cheeks. Her stout body is squeezed into



a purple satin dress, which has evidently grown too tight with time, and the defects of which she seeks to conceal by a lace scarf picturesquely wound about her shoulders. Her pearl-colored gloves are very short and very tight, and have all the button-holes burst out.

Slava wears some kind of a tri-colored dress and some very old jewelry, which she has bought on the journey at an antiquarian's in Verona. Her hair is arranged in antique style, and she is constantly turning her head toward her left shoulder, in order to look as much as possible like the Apollo. At the same time she assumes an expression as if she were about to have her photograph taken.

Vladimir Matuschowsky's slender conspirator's figure is encased in a braided coat; he holds in his hand a low hat decorated with tassels, and looks upon the dress-coats of the gentlemen, which intimidate him, as a personal insult.

"Monsieur Vladimir de Matuschowsky," Baroness Wolnitzky introduces him, "a—a—*un ami de la famille!*" Whenever the worthy lady is embarrassed, she generally begins to talk French.

In mamma Stertzl, who has, by degrees, recovered from her fright, the wish arises to shine before her sister.

"Count Sempaly," she says, introducing the *attaché*, "a friend of *our* family—my sister, Baroness Wolnitzky. You must have heard of the great Slave leader, my dear Sempaly, who created such a sensation in 1848."



Sempaly bows silently. Mme. Wolnitzky rises and courteously gives him her hand. "Glad to make your acquaintance, count. I have heard a good deal about you; my sister Clotilde has mentioned you in every letter; I am entirely *au courant*."

Once more Sempaly bows in silence; then, retiring somewhat to the background, while Slava also joins in the conversation with the lady of the house, he says to Stertzl in an undertone: "I'll take French leave; at such a meeting of relations a stranger is always out of place." His manner has suddenly grown very stiff, his tone very haughty. Stertzl nods. "You had better go, then," he whispers.

The lady of the house, however, suspecting his intention, calls to him: "No, no, my dear Sempaly, you must not leave us—you don't disturb us at all; and *you* certainly need not consider yourself a stranger."

"It might look as if we had driven you away," said Baroness Wolnitzky archly, "and I cannot suppose that."

And Sempaly stays—perhaps only from that impulse which sometimes incites us to see the end of a very annoying situation.

"Control yourself a little, Zini," Stertzl remonstrates with his sister in a low voice; "the interruption is very unpleasant. But you ought not to show your annoyance quite so plainly."



## CHAPTER VI.

TEA has been brought in. Stertzl, with praiseworthy heroism, devotes himself to his cousin Slava, in order to leave his spoilt little sister as much at liberty as possible. Slava treats him with condescension, and casts side-glances over her large Japanese fan at Sempaly, who, taciturn and out of humor, is seated on a small sofa beside Zinka, helping her prepare the tea. Baroness Wolnitzky noisily drinks one cup after another, eats up almost all the tea-cakes, and talks incessantly on the most incongruous subjects. Vladimir Matuschowsky gazes gloomily straight before him, consistently refuses all refreshments, and says not a word. With his arms crossed over his breast and his head thrown back, he sits there like a picture of human dignity on the defensive.

"I'm very hungry," confesses Madame Wolnitzky. "We are stopping at a good hotel, to be sure—Hotel della Stella, in the Via della Pace; a baron from Vienna, whom we met on the way here, recommended it to us. It's not exactly a first-class hotel, but still none but people of rank stop there. A Russian princess dined at the table-d'hôte with us, and a French marquise, too; she, to be sure, seemed to me rather doubtful. I think she is running away



with her lover, either from her husband or her creditors."

For the sake of propriety, the baroness, during this equivocal communication, holds her hand, with fingers spread, before her mouth on the side toward Zinka and Sempaly. "The dinner was good, very good," she continues; "we pay six francs board."

"Seven, mamma," Slava corrects her irritably.

"Six, Slava!"

"Seven, mamma!"

And then follows a vehement dispute between mother and daughter, extremely interesting for the rest of the company, as to whether the price of board at the Hotel della Stella is six or seven francs.

Slava remains mistress of the field. "And with candles and service it is eight," she finally asserts triumphantly.

"I let her talk," says Mme. Wolnitzky, again spreading out her hand before her mouth; "she is peculiar in that respect. Everything that is cheap seems common to her. But what was I about to say?—oh, yes—that at the table-d'hôte—there were flowers on the table—I did not get enough to eat," and with this she seized upon a piece of plum-cake.

At that moment the door opens, and Count Siegburg is announced.

"Good-evening, ladies," he cries, cheerily; "I was passing the house, and when I saw your windows lit up so comfortably, I could not deny myself the pleasure of coming up to see how Ash Wednesday agreed with you."



His eye glances over the three strangers. In a moment he has comprehended the situation; but, far from taking a tragic view of the same, he resolves, on the contrary, to derive the greatest possible amount of entertainment from it.

He asks to be introduced to the two ladies, and immediately establishes himself in a position from which he can overlook the whole company, Sem-paly included, and enjoy the conversation of both Madame and Mademoiselle Wolnitzky. He first addresses himself to the latter. "The name of Wolnitzky is deservedly famous," he says.

"Yes, my father played an important part in the year forty-eight," replies Slava.

"Siegburg — Siegburg," murmurs Mme. Wolnitzky in the mean time to her sister, "what Siegburgs? The Budow, or the Waldau, or the Merschenitz?"

"The Waldau Siegburgs—the mother was a Princess Haag," whispers Mme. Stertzl, leaning back among the sofa-cushions.

"Ah, the Waldau Siegburgs! Why, those are the best of all!"

"Of course," replies her sister with admirable nonchalance, as if she had been associating with no one but "the best Siegburgs" during her whole life.

Mme. Wolnitzky calls the most courteous expression to her broad face, and smiles at the young count, like one who is awaiting an opportunity to put in a word. But she is prevented from doing so for the present by her sister Clotilde, who asks,



with a manner in which acidity and sweetness are blended: "What has induced you to come to Rome?"

"Can you ask?" cries Madame Wolnitzky. "I had long wished to see Rome, and, when you wrote me such kind letters, Clotilde—that is——" and then she commences the story about her Bernini. "You remember our Bernini, Clotilde."

Madame Stertzl nods.

Seeing that Siegburg is beginning to pay attention to her words, Madame Wolnitzky turns to him and continues:

"I had in my possession a copy of the Belvedere Apollo—that is to say, only of the bust, executed by Bernini. This work of art had been in our family for generations——"

"For centuries," says Baroness Stertzl, in corroboration.

"I must confess that I was very reluctant to part with it," her sister goes on to say. "I made up my mind to it, however, when Tulpe, the famous antiquarian from Vienna, presented himself one day, and bought it."

Stertzl, who is not unacquainted with the wanderings of the Bernini, makes some allusion to them in his dry way—upon which, Madame Wolnitzky proceeds: "You see, count"—moving nearer and nearer to Siegburg—"it happened just as it does sometimes with girls. For years you take them about to balls, or you travel with them from one watering-place to another, and can't get rid of them;



and then you stay quietly at home, and suddenly a lover makes his appearance, when you have nearly given up all hope. It was very hard for me to part with that bust, I must say."

"The parting must have been trying," replies Siegburg with feeling.

"Very trying!" repeats Madame Wolnitzky, "and the more so as there is so remarkable a resemblance between my daughter and the Apollo. Have you not noticed it?"

"From the first. As soon as I entered the room I was struck by it," Siegburg assures her without the slightest hesitation.

"Every one says so—oh—oh—you can imagine, now, what a sacrifice it was for me—it makes my heart ache to think of it—oh, these emotions! You must excuse me if I take off my head-dress!" and with these words she energetically snatches the black lace structure from her head, and, passing her hand, with a free and easy gesture, through her scanty gray hair, cries: "Oh, heavens! we poor women are badly off; limited, restrained in all directions—we are not even allowed to be bald at our ease."

"Yes, indeed, the 'fate of woman is deplorable,'" quotes Siegburg in a tone of sympathy.

"You are a true original," cries Mamma Stertzl, giggling in some embarrassment. It is well known that good society has the habit of adorning unrefined relatives, whom it would be a relief to shut up in an insane asylum in order to make them



innocuous, with this title, "a true original." "Are you still given to advocating the emancipation of women?"

"No longer, dear Clotilde, no longer," replies Madame Wolnitzky; "since experience has taught me that every woman throws emancipation aside as soon as she has an opportunity to get married, I have lost my interest in emancipation."

"But you know the emancipation question refers particularly to those women who cannot marry," says Madame Stertzl, who had recently read an article on that much-discussed subject.

"And as there are positively more women than men in the world," remarks her sister, "I propose legal polygamy as a solution of the Female Emancipation question."

"*Maman, vous êtes d'une inconvenance!*" cries Slava, quite beside herself, with flashing eyes.

"Your views are shallow and narrow-minded," retorts her mother; "if I had spoken of this matter in a frivolous tone, I could comprehend your excitement. But I look at it philosophically. You understand me, count, I'm sure."

"Perfectly, madame," replies Siegburg, with grave dignity. "You regard the matter from the standpoint of political economy, and the standpoint of political economy knows no impropriety."

Sempaly twists his mustache; Zinka changes color constantly, and the lady of the house, with a shrill and forced laugh, pats her sister on the shoulder and cries: "An original—an original!"



Stertzl, who observes that Siegburg is highly entertained by the nonsensical talk of the old lady, and is on the point of laying a new snare for her eccentric mind, at last remembers, fortunately, that Slava's singing is the only means of imposing silence upon her mother.

He therefore asks his cousin to favor them with some national song. After Siegburg has joined in the request, and Slava has at first protested against the low pitch of the piano, the bad acoustic quality of the room, etc., etc., she finally allows herself to be persuaded to sing some patriotic songs to Matuschowsky's accompaniment. Her tall, erect Walkyrie-like figure trembles with romantic emotion, and, following strictly the traditions of the "*art frémissant*," she tears in two a piece of music which she holds in her hands during her performance, merely for the picturesque effect, and without its bearing the least relation to her singing.

Baroness Wolnitzky listens to her in deep silence, and sheds tears of rapture. Like many other mothers she observes in Slava merely those bad qualities with which she comes into conflict, and admires her otherwise.

When Slava has sung the last verse of the latest revolutionary Slavic song, which was prohibited in 1848, and Stertzl has asked himself which is really harder to bear, the absurd talk of his aunt or the singing of her daughter, Vladimir de Matuschowsky, whose ill-humor, thanks to the slight applause bestowed upon his and Slava's united mu-



sical efforts, has reached the highest point, observes that it is late, and that the ladies must be in need of rest after the fatigue of their journey.

Upon this Madame Wolnitzky hastily dispatches the last piece of tea-cake, calmly brushes the crumbs from her purple satin lap on to the carpet, rises, begins to approach the door with many bows and complimentary speeches, and spends fully half an hour in taking her leave.

When his relatives had finally disappeared, and the two gentlemen had likewise bidden the ladies good-evening, Stertzl, who had accompanied them into the vestibule, said to Siegburg good-naturedly: "I think you are the only one among us who has really found this evening entertaining."

Siegburg reddened; then, looking up at Stertzl frankly, he asked: "Can you blame me for it?"

"Perhaps—a little," replied Stertzl with a smile; "but I admit that the temptation was very strong."

"To tell the truth, I pity you, Stertzl," said Siegburg cordially, and with that considerate indiscretion which always won him friends; "there's nothing in the world more disagreeable than disagreeable relations who suddenly thrust themselves upon you. I know that by experience. Last spring, in Vienna, half a dozen old aunts from the Bukowina suddenly rained down upon my mother——"

Sempaly, in the mean time, much out of sorts, slipped into his otter-lined overcoat and remained silent.



## CHAPTER VII.

THREE days have passed since Truyn so categorically bade his cousin make up his mind—since the sudden appearance of the grotesque baroness Wolnitzky dispelled the lovely witchery which had taken possession of Sempaly's soul, and caused him to leave unspoken the avowal of love which hovered upon his lips—and he has not yet made his application to be transferred to another post. Everywhere, during these three days, Truyn's eyes have followed him; again and again they have rested upon him with a grave, questioning expression, as if they would say: "Have you decided?"

No, he has not yet decided. Nothing is harder for a man like Sempaly than to come to a decision. In his case, it is always Destiny which determines, and not he.

Sempaly's collision with the baroness could, indeed, drive back the declaration which he was about to utter, but it is beyond his power to efface Zinka's image from his heart. He has forgotten the absurd speeches of the foolish old woman; the *stornello* which Zinka sang that evening is still ringing in his ear. For two days he put a curb upon himself, and avoided the Palazetto; but during that time he met Zinka accidentally for a moment at the



Corso. She was riding in Princess Vulpini's carriage, and sat beside her. She wore a dress of stone-colored velvet, and a large mousquetaire hat which threw a shadow over her forehead and over the golden sheen of her hair. She held a large bouquet upon her knees, and was chatting gayly with Gabrielle Truyn and the little Vulpinis. What a charming way she had with children, so playful and so kind! His heart beat violently when her eye met his, and she returned his greeting, coloring slightly.

It was the first time that she had blushed on seeing him.

That night his sleep was troubled by the most absurd dreams. And now he is strolling about in the sun-flooded morning solitude of the Pincio, brooding and giving vent to his irritation by breaking twigs from the bushes which he passes. It seems to him more and more as if it were a *sine qua non* of his existence to call Zinka his own. He has never yet denied himself a pleasure, and now——

. . . . .  
A bright March sunshine is gilding the Piazza di Spagna; the waters of the Barcaccia fountain sparkle and glitter in a dazzling bluish splendor of light. The towers of the Trinità dei Monti Church are sharply defined against the blue atmosphere. On the flat steps of the Spanish Stairs, models clad in conventional Italian costumes crouch beside blind beggars, who are incessantly mumbling prayers in an undertone.



In front of the Hotel de l'Europe, the cab-drivers doze comfortably beneath their much-mended umbrellas, which, fastened to their seats, serve, like those of the market-women, alternately as shelter from rain or from sunshine. On every door-sill crouches a flower-vender, and now and then there sits beside one of them a white black-eyed Spitz, with his little nose high up in the air. The Piazza is crowded with tourists, and the eyes of Beatrice Cenci, the saddest eyes in the world, look out from the window of a photograph-shop upon the trivial doings of every-day life.

Calm in mind, and suspecting no evil, Siegburg comes out of Law's banking-house, and, as he inhales with much satisfaction the delicious air, redolent of daffodils and hyacinths, his eyes follow approvingly the handsome figure of a young English lady in a close-fitting guernsey, who happens to be passing. Still absorbed in this view, he starts in surprise as he hears a harsh voice exclaim: "Good-morning, count; *quelle chance!*" He turns round, and recognizes the broad crimson face which looks out at him from under an immense poke-hat as that of Baroness Wolnitzky.

Although the sun is shining brightly, the worthy lady wears that most unbecoming of all garments, which, originally intended for a water-proof cloak, but subsequently used—or rather abused—to cover all sorts of defects of the toilet, has long ago been christened by the "Gavroches" of Paris, very appropriately, *cache-misère*. And, in spite of the dry-



ness of the pavements, she holds up that *cache-misère* and the dress which it conceals, with both hands, thereby distinctly exposing to view a pair of enormous feet clad in congress-boots with stretched out elastics.

"Ah, baroness," raising his hat, "I had really not——"

"No, you had not recognized me," replies the baroness serenely, "and therefore I spoke to you first. *Quelle chance!* You belong to the embassy, too, don't you?"

"Certainly——"

"That's lucky! I have a favor to ask of you. My daughter wishes to obtain an audience with the Pope. Slava is a strict Catholic, you see; but, between you and me, I think that is a mere matter of fashion. My views of religious matters are purely philosophical. However, it would interest me, too, to see the Pope——"

"Unfortunately the Pope is at present less accessible than he used to be," replies Siegburg, "and, besides, I do not belong to the papal embassy, and consequently, I regret to say, cannot be of service to you in this respect."

"So my nephew says, too; it is provoking, very provoking——"

At this moment Slava comes out of Piale's book-store, dressed in a shabby directoire costume, a large hat with feathers, and a pair of rather soiled gloves reaching above her elbows,



"Ah, *bon jour!*" she cries courteously, holding out the tips of her fingers to the young count. Matuschowsky, who accompanies her, merely touches his hat glumly.

Surrounded on all sides as he now is, Siegburg begins to find the situation rather alarming.

"It is always so pleasant to meet one's compatriots in foreign lands," observes Slava.

"Extremely so," answers Siegburg, thinking to himself: "I wish I could see my way out of this!" But suddenly fun once more peeps out maliciously from his merry eyes, for he hears the baroness again cry: "*Quelle chance!*" and sees her steering at the same time for no other than Sempaly, who, out of humor and absorbed, has just descended the sun-baked Spanish Stairs to the Piazza.

"Excuse me!" he too mutters, with a start; "I really had not recognized you."

Sempaly's eyes seek the distance, as do those of all who find themselves in a trying position.

In the mean time Madame Wolnitzky continues unabashed: "I am delighted to meet you, count; for I have a favor to ask of you. Could you not get me a permit for the Farnesina? The Duca di Ripalda is said to be very particular——"

"I am sorry that it is quite im——" At this moment, Sempaly's attention is attracted by a group of foreigners—two young ladies with a maid. The two ladies, tall, slender as young pines, and dressed



in close-fitting English cloth costumes, both strikingly handsome, are carrying on a lively discussion with an Italian who has embroidered strips of cloth for sale, and seem to take great pleasure in making purchases on the street.

"What charming girls—I think I know them!" says Madame Wolnitzky. "Are they not the Latin-skys?"

At that moment the young ladies look up. "Nicki—Nicki!" they cry joyfully across half the Piazza, with the unconcern of those who have been brought up in the belief that the world was created solely for them.

"Excuse me, baroness," mutters Sempaly. "My cousins——" and so saying he leaves her with a bow in order to hasten to the other ladies.

"When did you come—where are you staying?"

"We arrived this morning. We are at the Hotel de Londres; mamma has just sent a note to you to the embassy; ah, another Austrian!" as Siegburg joins the group. "Rome seems to be an annex of Vienna. Do tell me who was that old fortune-teller with the enterprising daughter, with whom you two were so closely engaged?"

In the mean time the Wolnitzky party pass the lovely girls—mamma with a very courteous manner, Slava as proudly as if she were the Belvidere Apollo himself—and turn into the Via Condotti.

Suddenly the baroness stops. "There! I forgot entirely to ask Count Sempaly to get me some tickets for the International Artists' Festival!" she



cries, striking her hand against her forehead. Then she turns, with the evident intention of rectifying her mistake, and nothing but Vladimir Matuschowsky's resolute energy saves Sempaly from a renewed attack.



## CHAPTER VIII.

It is on the Pincio, between five and six—the hour when society assembles daily on the great terrace where the band plays, and from which one can see the sun setting behind St. Peter's.

The reflection of the sunset glides over the gravel of the terrace with a dim golden sheen, flashes with a bright yellow light from the brass buttons of the uniforms and the instruments of the band, and enamels with a metallic blue the ripples of the great basin behind the music-stand. Long black shadows stretch across the lawns; the palms, the yucca-trees, and the evergreen oaks stand out in marvellously rich colors against the partly blushing, partly fading sky.

The green, shady portions of the Pincio are shunned by the world in general: only four special classes of the human race are to be met with there—governesses, nurses, children, and priests. All kinds of priests are represented: noble monsignori, with their fine-cut features, their erect, military carriage, and their delicate hands; monks, whose bearded and tonsured heads look out comfortably from their brown cowls; whole battalions of seminarists, clad in all imaginable colors, tall and thin, with green, immature faces.

Divided from them by a mere veil of leaves



surges the fashionable crowd—Roman society in elegant equipages, foreigners in more or less respectable livery-carriages, among which, indeed, there occasionally appears a numbered one or two horse-cab. Thicker and thicker grows the crowd of vehicles, broader and broader the stream of Roman fashion rolls from the Villa Borghese across the Piazza del Popolo, up the ascent to the Monte Pincio.

On the plateau of the Pincio the carriages stop; the gentlemen crowd around them to pay their respects to their fair acquaintances; the ladies call out from one carriage to another merry remarks, totally incomprehensible to the uninitiated. From the gardens which are terraced down from the Pincio to the Via Margutta, there rises a "sweet fragrance of budding spring-life. Far below lies Rome, and, dominating its confused sea of houses and ruins, stern and rigid, colossal, even in the distance, with the sunset-light playing around it, St. Peter's rises above the horizon.

Countess Ilsenbergh's carriage stands beside that of Princess Vulpini; the Iatinsky family is divided between them. Beside Countess Ilsenbergh sits Countess Iatinsky, leaning back indolently and with a pleasant smile on her face.

Princess Vulpini acts as chaperone to the young ladies; on the back seat, beside his cousin Eugenie—she is called Nini by the family—sits Sempaly. Siegburg leans on the carriage-door, and entertains them all with witty, lively talk. He tells them all



the gossip about Roman society which can be told with propriety to young ladies. They laugh heartily and melodiously, and their child-like merriment finally infects Sempaly, too, who was rather taciturn and absent-minded for some time after he took his place beside his cousin Nini—a place which the whole male portion of Roman society envies him heartily.

Just then a certain excitement arises in the crowd; everybody is looking in the same direction.

"What is it?" asked Polyxena Iatinsky, bending forward.

"It must be Prince Doria's new drag, or the King," says Princess Vulpini, screwing up her near-sighted eyes.

"No," observed Siegburg, after looking round; "neither of those. It is Baroness Wolnitzky."

In the very handsome landau which Madame Stertzl had placed at their disposal for the afternoon, are seated the two Wolnitzkys, mother and daughter. They are both dressed in their best. The daughter leans back haughtily; the mother stands up most of the time, and looks at Roman society through an opera-glass. Only occasionally she sits down, either to rest or because she cannot keep her balance. Once seated, she never fails to show her satisfaction with her borrowed equipage by closely examining and handling one or another of its details. It is especially her eccentric manner, joined to her very conspicuous appearance, that causes the unusual sensation created by Madame Stertzl's



landau—a sensation which mother and daughter, of course, attribute to Slava's striking resemblance to the Apollo of Belvedere.

"Madame Wolnitzky, that crazy old woman with whom we saw you talking yesterday?" cries Polyxena.

"Yes."

"Only think, Nicki! "—this to Sempaly—"mamma knows her."

"Of whom are you speaking, children?" Countess Iatinsky calls across to her daughters.

"Of Madame Wolnitzky, mamma; don't you see her there?"

"*Dieu m'en garde!*" cries her mother with energy, "you're not sure of your life with her. To-day she attacked me in the Villa Wolkonsky."

"How do you happen to know the old lady, aunt?" asked Sempaly, rather impatiently.

"My husband formerly had some political relations with Wolnitzky," explained the countess. "She is insufferable; for full half an hour she kept close beside me!"

"You must have found her conversation very interesting, countess," remarked Siegburg, rather sarcastically.

"Very far from it," replied the countess in a vexed tone; "she told me how much her trip is costing her, the amount of carriage hire which she pays every day, and that she took singing-lessons in her youth from Cicimara. And she spoke with particular pride of her sister, Madame Stertzl, who,



she says, lives in grand style here and has intercourse exclusively with the 'cream of society.'—What are you laughing at?"

"You must confess, mamma, that the name of Stertzl in connection with the 'cream of society' is irresistibly funny!" cries Polyxena.

"I did not find her talk funny at all," replies her mother in a tone of complaint; "*à propos*, she did tell me something interesting, after all—namely, that her niece, Zenaïde Stertzl—what makes you laugh again?"

"Zenaïde Stertzl—that name is a poem!" cries Countess Polyxena.

"Well, it seems, from what she told me, that this fair Zenaïde is on the point of exchanging the objectionable name of Stertzl for one of the finest names in Austria—that is what the old goose gave me to understand. She said it had not been announced yet, and for that reason she could not tell me the gentleman's name, but that Zenaïde was as good as engaged to a young count—an *attaché* of the Austrian legation. Who can it be? You ought to know."

"Oh, indeed!—does it happen to be you?" exclaimed Polyxena, turning to Siegburg.

Siegburg shakes his head, and, stroking his blonde mustache with a malicious smile, takes note of Sempaly's evident vexation.

"Or is it you, Nicki?" Polyxena cries again roguishly. "I congratulate you upon your agreeable relatives!" But so marked a feeling of embar-



rassment suddenly seizes upon the whole party that she is silenced.

"I know nothing about it," declares Sempaly angrily. "That old chatterbox must have a tremendous imagination."

The flashing light on the uniform buttons and the brass instruments of the musicians grows redder and more faint; the white gleam on the evergreen leaves dies away.

The band plays "*Gran Dio! morir si giovane!*"

The sun has set; light and shade are effaced; the day is dead; the night has not yet come. Behind St. Peter's there is a dark red glow like that of a subsiding conflagration.

"*Au revoir* at the Ellis' to-night!" the ladies call out to Siegburg, as he makes his farewell bow.

The carriages roll down the Pincio, past the Villa Medici—down, down into the heart of Rome. Through the evening air there resounds a great irregular rushing, like that of a stream which is flowing toward the sea.



## CHAPTER IX.

MR. AND LADY JULIA ELLIS—as the daughter of an earl she retained her title—were an English couple, with an enormous fortune and brilliant connections, who for many years past had spent the cold season in Italy, because Lady Julia could not bear the northern winters. In former years her eccentricities had been much talked about; now she was a very old lady with white hair, faultlessly regular features, and arms that were too fleshy. Like all Englishwomen, she appeared *decolletée* on all state occasions, and at such times was fond of wearing pink feathers in her hair.

Her husband, Mr. Ellis, was younger than she, had a handsome, truly English face, short whiskers, and picturesquely flowing white hair. His profile bore some resemblance to that of Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy—a fact of which he was very proud. There were two other things of which he was proud: of his wife, because, in her day, she had been admired by George IV., and of an old umbrella in his possession, because Mendelssohn had on one occasion borrowed it of him.

He was very fond of playing the concertina, and gave a musical *soirée* once a week. The evening on which the Iatinskys were to make their first ap-



pearance at the Ellis', Tulpin, the Russian amateur genius who had arranged the musical background of the Ilsenbergh tableaux, performed a new opera which he had composed to a French libretto on a Russian subject. Of course he was one of those Russians who combine a boundless predilection for everything Slavic with the pious wish to be taken, wherever they appear, for native Parisians.

The grand piano rang again beneath his hands. Various old acquaintances from "*Orfée à l'Enfer*" and "*Le Mariage à la Lanterne*" were rocked on a sea of sonorous tremolos. From time to time Tulpin called out to his audience in explanation: "Now the Czar speaks—the Bojar speaks—the peasant speaks"—or "the rushing of the wind in the Caucasus—the foaming of the Terek!"

Mr. Ellis, who believed in Tulpin's opera, cried from time to time: "Glorious—glorious! You must work up that opera—it is too good for a mere sketch!"

"Work?" sighed Tulpin with delicate irony "work? That is not my affair. *We* have ideas! But the work—that we leave to—hm—hm—to others. Please remember that I cannot read a note—actually, not a note," he repeated with indescribable self-sufficiency.

Upon this he dashed off a few rough arpeggios, and Mr. Ellis once more cried: "Astonishing!" and compared him to Mendelssohn, at which Tulpin, who belonged to the School of the Future, took offence.



A prize-crowned musician from the Villa Medici, who had been waiting for an hour to perform his "*Sinfonie Arabe*," muttered to himself: "*Pour l'amour du ciel, laissez-nous la musique pour nous consoler de n'être pas grand seigneur!*"

At last Lady Julia rose and compassionately invited her guests to take a cup of tea. Her proposition was readily accepted. Soon the music-room was nearly empty. The only persons who remained near the piano were Mme. Tulpin from love, the prize-crowned musician from annoyance, and Mr. Ellis from a sense of duty. In the adjoining rooms people were refreshing themselves with tea and conversation; but for some time a low-spirited feeling seemed to pervade the whole company. Depression had broken out among the guests like an epidemic, and there was a lively discussion as to the pleasantest mode of committing suicide.

Tulpin played on indefatigably; suddenly, however, he stopped. The Iatinskys had made their appearance in the *salon*. The eyes of all were turned upon them. They were so interesting that even Tulpin left the piano on their account.

They all three smiled pleasantly, one might say graciously. Countess Ilsenbergh had prepared them for the promiscuous character of foreign society in Rome. They felt their superiority, but concealed their self-consciousness beneath the most courteous affability.

The two young countesses were immediately surrounded, besieged, and, strange to say, they



caused even a greater sensation among the ladies on this occasion than among the gentlemen. Everything about them was admired: their tiny feet, their characteristic profiles, so delicate and so sharply defined, their improbably small waists, the color of their hair, the artistic simplicity of their toilet. Wagers were laid as to whether their dresses came from Fanet's or from Worth's.

Suddenly a slight commotion arose in the adjoining apartment—such as is apt to be caused by the advent of some favorite in society. Zinka, without her mother, escorted only by Cecil, entered the room, and, with a cordial greeting, held out her slender hand to the lady of the house.

"You are an incorrigible laggard; you always come too late," said Lady Julia in kindly reproach.

"Like repentance and the police," answered Zinka gayly, upon which her hostess introduced her to Countess Iatinsky. "But now you must help me a little in serving tea," Lady Julia continued; "you know I always count upon you. First of all, please pour out a cup for each of your charming young countrywomen there."

Polyxena and Nini were seated at a short distance from her, surrounded by a crowd of gentlemen, young and old. Zinka was approaching them with her winning charm of manner, when Sempaly happened to come up, and found himself so suddenly face to face with her that he could not avoid shaking hands with her, nor resist the temptation of speaking to her. Of course he did what every one else would



have done in his place, he said the most awkward thing which he could possibly have said—namely: “I have not seen you in a long time.”

Slightly throwing back her head, she flashed at him a look of becoming defiance from her half-closed eyes, and replied: “Have you been keeping up your Ash-Wednesday penance?”

“Perhaps so!” he said with an involuntary smile.

She shrugged her shoulders. “I really felt inclined,” she continued, “to give you up entirely; but since I have become aware of the cause of your breach of faith”—glancing at his fair cousins—“I can at least account for it. Will you have the goodness, now, to introduce me to these ladies?”

“Fräulein Stertzl!” He had hardly pronounced the name, when a suppressed smile curled Polyxena’s lips. Zinka observed this smile, and also noticed a sudden change in Sempaly’s bearing, and that his face assumed an affected, intensely supercilious expression. Pale as death, with flashing eyes, she returned only slightly the nods of the two countesses, and turned away. Stertzl, who, standing in a doorway talking with Truyn, had observed the occurrence from a distance, frowned angrily.

In the mean time, Sempaly had seated himself on an ottoman beside his cousins, taking care to turn his back to the tea-table at which Zinka was engaged.

“So that is the famous Zenaïde Stertzl?” said Polyxena archly. “Your taste is not so bad, Nicki,



But how she spoke to you! That was going a little too far."

He did not reply.

"She actually disposes of you as if you already belonged to her."

"Do be careful, Xena!" remonstrated Nini, trying to check her sister's love of raillery; "don't talk so loud."

Soon after this Mr. Ellis came to say that Mr. B., the *prix de musique*, would now perform his "*Sinfonie Arabe*."

The company repaired to the music-room. After Mr. B. had finished, several other interesting performances followed. A young Belgian count, who spent the whole of his leisure time in composing funeral-marches, and could, besides, sing *canzonettas* and *chansonnettes* such as are no longer heard anywhere but in the streets of Florence or the *cafés-chantants* of Paris, took his place at the piano and executed a love-duet between a cock and a hen with so much expression that he was rewarded with loud applause from all present—in particular the Latin-skys, to whom this style of music was quite new.

Mrs. Ferguson next sang some Paris *couplets*, and Mr. Ellis played an adagio by Beethoven on the concertina, after which Zinka was asked to sing.

"What shall I sing? you know my *répertoire*," she said to Mr. Ellis with forced gayety.

"Please sing one of your '*stornelli*,'" begged Siegburg, approaching the piano — "the '*Vieni*



*Maggio, vieni primavera.*" Lady Ellis seconded his request.

Zinka laid her fingers on the keys, and began—somewhat veiled, but sweet like that of a forest-bird, her voice vibrated through the hall. She had never yet begun that song in company, but what *he* had come to her side after the first bars, from the most distant corner of whatever room they were in. Involuntarily she looked up and sought him with her eyes. There he sat on a small sofa beside his cousin Polyxena, leaning back in a very easy attitude, one leg crossed over the other, holding his ankle with his hand, and smiling at something which the young countess was whispering to him.

Zinka was completely disconcerted. A paralyzing feeling of mortification came over her. She could no longer sing that song before him. Her voice failed her. She forgot the accompaniment, tried to strike a few chords, and rose suddenly. "I cannot sing to-night," she stammered.

Polyxena made some further malicious remark.

Sempaly was vexed thereat, and was on the point of leaving her, in order to console Zinka for her failure, but before he could make up his mind to do so, Nini had risen. In spite of her shyness, she crossed the room to Zinka and said a few kind words to her.

Sempaly kept his seat. But when, as they were leaving, he was putting Nini's wrap over her shoulders, he murmured: "You are a dear good girl, Nini." And then he kissed her hand.



## CHAPTER X.

SEMPALY'S attentions had brought Zinka into fashion; his sudden cessation of not only these attentions, but of almost all relations with her, of course made her the subject of much scandal. There was a great deal of talk about the excellent caricature of Stertzl and his sister which Sempaly had sketched that evening at Princess Vulpini's. Madame de Gandry, who had formerly been the object of Sempaly's attentions, but had subsequently been neglected by him for Zinka's sake, showed this caricature to her acquaintances with the most malicious explanations. There was a general laugh against the little adventuress, who had come to Rome with the intention of securing a closed coronet, and who now was obliged to submit to such profound humiliation.

The leaders of Roman society, of course, vied with those of the foreign circles in entertaining the Iatinskys. Countess Gandry began the round of ovations with a *soirée*, at which Madame Ristori was to declaim. Stertzl was of course invited. His mother and sister were passed over. It was the first time since Zinka's *début* at the Ilsenberghs, that she was not included in any select assembly. Many of the foreign ladies followed Madame de Gan-



dry's example, thus intending, like her, to display their exclusiveness before the Austrian countesses, and at the same time repay Zinka for many a little saucy speech which they had been obliged to put up with from her while she still belonged to the favorites of society and the leaders of the *ton*.

True Roman society naturally did not pay the slightest attention to all these trifles, and treated Zinka with exactly the same superficial courtesy as heretofore. She noticed that courtesy as little as the pin-pricks to which she was subjected from other quarters. If her feeling for Sempaly had not been so serious, she certainly would have been deeply hurt at all the little social humiliations with which she was constantly meeting at this time. But her great sorrow had blunted her against such things as these. There is a grief which mockery cannot reach! No matter whether she was invited or not, she could not make up her mind to go into society any more. The thought of again meeting Sempaly with his cousins anywhere filled her with mortal terror.

She had become a different creature. An intimidated smile was constantly hovering upon her lips, like the ghost of a dead joy; her motions had lost all elasticity; her walk now reminded one constantly of that of an angel dragging its wings.

Baroness Stertzl, of course, continued to frequent the Corso, and took pains to bow to all the society ladies with astonishing perseverance; she also went into company alone, whenever it suited her. The



consciousness of being at odds with Countess Gandry, and yet on visiting terms with all the Roman duchesses, was a proud one, after all.

The only thing which troubled her at this time was the cross-questioning of her very indiscreet sister Wolnitzky with regard to the state of affairs between Zinka and Sempaly.

Madame Stertzl had herself, from mere idle boastfulness, given her sister to understand, on the day after her arrival, "that Zinka's engagement was only not yet made public." The indelicate allusions of her aunt would have driven Zinka to the verge of insanity, had not Siegburg, fortunately, and perhaps out of compassion for her, told the Wolnitzkys one evening, when he met them at the Palazetto, such horrible stories about Roman fever, that, seized with a senseless panic, they left Rome the next morning for Naples.

. . . . .

Strange to say, the one who felt most deeply the sudden hostile change of society toward his family was Stertzl. Hitherto he had always thought too nobly to torment himself with any small envy of caste, and had, at the same time, cherished too sensible, serious, and manly a self-consciousness ever to manifest any of that repulsive sensitiveness which often renders the intercourse with civilians difficult even for the best-disposed aristocrats.

Democratic spleen is a sickness which almost every civilian—beginning with Werther—has to pass through if fate has placed him in aristocratic



circles. Stertzl, however, had lived in these circles so long that he ought to have been acclimated. But no—he had a sudden attack, and, as is the case with all children's diseases which seize upon adults, it took a very violent form. He attributed his adored sister's sorrow, not to his own imprudence and Sempaly's weakness of character, but solely to tyrannical social prejudices. He persecuted society from that time with the most invidious contempt, and made himself generally disagreeable. Perfectly well-bred, and accustomed from his youth to the smallest exactions of decorum, his manners could never become quite bad, but they became as bad as they could. Overbearing, irritable, without the slightest courtesy, he was constantly involved in all sorts of controversies and quarrels.

At home, too, he was very different from what he had been. His pride was terribly hurt by the fact that Zinka was so little able to conceal her sorrow; and he felt humiliated, because it was beyond his power to alleviate it.

At first he tried to divert her mind; he brought her tickets for the theatre and for concerts, and gave her the handsomest, most precious articles of jewelry, as well as antique, artistically valuable porcelain curios, carvings in ivory, and many other similar things, which formerly had been her heart's desire. Then she would have been wild with joy at these beautiful gifts; now she smiled at them with the gratitude of an invalid to whom a delicacy



is offered of which he can no longer partake. One could always see what pains she took to feel pleased, and at the same time her eyes would be full of tears.

This drove Stertzl beside himself. At first he had strictly avoided saying a single word in allusion to Sempaly. But when days, even weeks, passed by without producing any change in her depressed manner, he became impatient. He conceived the notion of opening Zinka's eyes with regard to Sempaly. Energetic and inclined to press forward as he was, he had invariably recovered speedily from his disappointments, however deeply they had affected him. He had always calmly "let that fall which would not stand," and then had been able to build up a new world for himself.

To see clearly had always been the main thing with him; truth was his religion. He could not understand that, to a character like Zinka's, illusions were necessary; nor that she even now attributed the change in Sempaly to the circumstances in which he was placed, to her own insignificance, to everything but to his own wish; that she felt the need of being able to love him still, even if he were lost to her forever. His rigid nature could not understand Zinka's tender, constantly fluctuating inner life.

She never replied to the disparaging, contemptuous words which he applied to Sempaly on every occasion, but listened in silence, and looked, with her shy, frightened eyes and pale cheeks, like a



dying martyr whom her tormentors are trying to convince that there is no God.

The brilliant result which Cecil achieved by his well-meant blunders was a temporary complete estrangement between himself and his sister—an estrangement which in his case was only on the surface, but which affected her more seriously.

All this of course contributed to intensify Stertzl's hatred of Sempaly.

They were obliged to meet every day; they were constantly at odds with each other.

Stertzl made the most cutting remarks regarding some slight negligence of which Sempaly had been guilty in his work. He spoke sneeringly of the ignorance of a young relative of Sempaly's, who had lately been attached to the legation. "To be sure," he then closed his invective, "to be sure, we in Austria are far more particular that an *attaché* should be of good family than that he should write and spell correctly."

This was a specimen of the rude impertinence to which he now allowed himself to give way.

Without ever losing his equanimity, Sempaly would smile languidly at such a remark, and perhaps reply, in his singing voice: "You are right; it is strange that such prejudices should still exist among us. Hm! we ought to follow the example of the French *corps diplomatique*—don't you think so?"

This referred to a sarcastic article which had appeared in *Figaro*, the day before, concerning the



latest blunder of a plebeian representative of the republic at some court of Europe.

Well, Sempaly might have said something even more supercilious, but the more delicate his irony the more surely did Stertzl's irritation increase.



## CHAPTER XI.

COUNTESS IATINSKY spent most of the time of her stay in Rome on her lounge. When she was asked how she liked Rome, she would answer that she found it very fatiguing; if the same question was put to her daughters, they, on the contrary, would declare that they were delighted with it.

Sempaly knew perfectly well that the chief attraction for them in Rome was no other than their good-for-nothing cousin. And, indeed, he made himself very agreeable to them; alternately praised and disapproved of their dress; made, with his own hands, becoming changes in their coiffures, faithfully reported all the conquests which they had made, and gave them presents of cigarettes and expensive articles of jewelry from Castellani's.

When he had nothing else to do he would go with them, of course in the company of an older lady, to some gallery or church. Polyxena had a very characteristic way of rushing past the grandest masterpieces with her little nose high up in the air, and suddenly directing attention, with a laugh, to the absurdly foolish remark of some tourist which she happened to have overheard, or to some eccentricity of costume which she had discovered. Nini took a more serious view of art—looked at every-



thing in strict adherence to the catalogue, and even kept a travelling-diary.

Polyxena was generally considered the handsomer and more intellectual of the two sisters. Sempaly apparently paid her the most attention, but he decidedly preferred Nini. The time which he could not devote to his cousins he spent almost exclusively at the hunting-club, where he lost enormous sums at play. At the same time he looked ill, and complained of having touches of Roman fever.

What did the world say to his conduct? Italian society, phlegmatic as ever, took no notice of it. Mesdames Ferguson and Gandry laughed at it. Siegburg pronounced it abominable, and Ilsenbergh declared that, to say the least, it showed great want of tact. The general opinion was that he ought to have had himself transferred.

Princess Vulpini had long, compassionate conferences with the artist-general, reproached herself bitterly for not having realized the situation sooner, nor, indeed, having taken particular notice of Sempaly's very marked attentions to Zinka, because she had been solely interested in Siegburg's efforts in the same direction, and taken the most motherly pleasure in the prospective "good match" which she hoped would result therefrom.

Truyn was quite beside himself at Sempaly's heartlessness. Only those who, during a period of deep, and at the same time bitterly humiliating sorrow, have had beside them a noble, delicately



sympathetic friend, can realize what Truyn was to Zinka at this time. He was the only one who never gave her pain in those dark days. He had the delicate touch and the boundless tenderness of feeling which the best of us only acquire through bitter, heartfelt sorrow.

Every afternoon he would come with his little daughter to take Zinka for a walk, because he knew that the Corso drive would be agony for her now. And while the baroness, leaning indolently back in her carriage, drove through the Villa Borghese and over the Pincio with the fashionable crowd, these three—sometimes the general would make a fourth—would ramble about in quiet, dreamy convent gardens, or take long drives through the Campagna.

Not once did Truyn cost her a secret tear and many a painful blush, which some thoughtless remark of one of her companions called to her thin cheek, he helped her overcome.

. . . . .

On a sultry afternoon in spring, Truyn and his two daughters—as he was wont to call Zinka and Gabrielle in jest—together with the artist-general, were sauntering, on their return from a long walk, through some of the dark and picturesque streets which wind around the Pantheon.

The surroundings were poor and wretched; over a garden-wall there peeped a mulberry-tree, which already showed the first faint green of spring, while a blackbird was singing in its branches. A



couple of scarlet geraniums sent out their glowing color from a rusty barred window into the brown monotony around about. Above the roofs the sky was of a deep, deep blue. The air was sultry and oppressive, and filled with an unpleasant odor of the gutter and stale vegetables. Behind a window a woman's voice was singing a sad, tender love-song. Suddenly both the blackbird and the woman ceased singing; a doleful wailing and moaning resounded through the lonely street, and black smoke darkened the air.

Zinka, very nervous, as she had grown to be of late, started violently. "It is nothing—only a funeral," said Truyn, as he removed his hat.

And then it appeared—a Roman funeral, picturesque and dismal—a long procession of men, in gloomy disguise: a bag over their heads with only two holes cut for the eyes, a rope tied around their waists, bearing torches or curious banners decorated with the insignia of death; a crowd of barefooted monks; finally the coffin, covered with a bright yellow pall, and carried by other muffled figures, bending under its weight. Add to this the reddish flare and the black smoke of the torches, the lugubrious singing, the flashing of eyes from the slits in the head-pieces—ghostly, and surrounded by a mingled odor of decay and of incense, like a piece of mediæval life arisen from the dead—thus the procession passed through the narrow street.

Half-fainting, Zinka stood beside Truyn.



Gabrielle, who, like all children, was proportionally little affected by the scene, followed the funeral with inquisitive eyes, and soon commenced a conversation with an old woman of the people in her ready, incorrect Italian.

"Who is being buried there?" she asked, after having made several other remarks.

"*Una donna*," was the answer.

"Was she young?" Gabrielle asked again.

"*Si*."

"And what did she die of—fever?"

"*No*," the Roman woman shrugged her shoulders, and then said, in the melodious drawl of the Roman people, "*Di passione*."

The procession had passed, the moaning had died away, the blackbird sang again.

The party went on, Truyn in front, with Zinka, who was weary, leaning on his arm; behind them the lively child and the general.

"*Passione!* Is that a Roman sickness?" asked Gabrielle, with her unquenchable thirst for knowledge, of the general.

"No, it is found everywhere," replied the general dryly.

"But only among poor people, is it not?" continued Gabrielle.

"No, it appears in higher circles, too—only there it is called by another name," said the general with thoughtless bitterness, more to himself than to the child.



"Why, is it a disgrace to die of it?" asked the child, opening her eyes wide.

Suddenly the general noticed that Zinka was listening. At the child's foolish question she bowed her head.

His mind would have been totally paralyzed on such an occasion; he would not have known what to say to the poor, humiliated girl. With Truyn, however, it was different. He bent down and whispered a few words to her. What he said the general could not understand, but it must have been something very kind and good—something that, without relating to what had happened, showed her how highly he valued and esteemed her, for she answered him quite calmly. Then he talked about one thing and another, told her reminiscences of his youth, pleasant little characteristic stories about his parents, and other matters of the kind, such as a wounded heart can enjoy, and when he took leave of her at the portal of the Palazetto, she was smiling.

"If he has not the most intellectual head in the world, he has certainly the kindest of hearts," muttered the general to himself as they parted.

. . . . .

Several times Truyn took Zinka for a ride in the Campagna. At first she enjoyed this. But one day they met Sempaly, who, with his two lovely cousins, was gayly galloping over the plain strewn with anemones. From that time she sought for



pretexts and avoided the Campagna. As if she were not always liable to meet him with them anywhere!

Why did she stay in Rome? Stertzl would not consent to her leaving, because in his opinion such a departure would have been regarded by scandal-monging Roman society as a retreat after a lost battle. For a very different reason, the baroness too objected to any abbreviation of their sojourn in Rome. She had hired the Palazetto until the fifteenth of May.

And did Zinka really wish to go?

She often spoke of her longing for home; but every time that their departure from Rome was mentioned she became agitated. She dreaded to meet *him*, and yet she longed to do so. And when, in the evening, she was sitting in the drawing-room of the Palazetto with a few acquaintances—Truyn came every night, Siegburg very often—the former noticed that, every time she heard the house-door close, she would start and fix her eyes expectantly upon the *portière*.

In her poor heart there still lived a kind of hope, a weary hope, sick unto death, which was no longer anything but a feeling of disquiet—of pain.



### *PART III.—EASTER.*

---

#### CHAPTER I.

HOLY WEEK in Rome! And everywhere the full splendor of an Italian spring, pervaded by glowing sunshine!

Even into the mystic half-light of St. Peter's the spring-rays find their way, flicker for a moment on the holy water in the basins, glide over the gigantic cherubs, the complicated grandeur of the statues, and the delicate inlaid pattern of the pavement; all this with the cold glitter of a beam of light which is refracted by the smooth hardness of marble.

The hours pass, one after another—the long, devout hours of Holy Wednesday in Rome. Then the last ray of light fades away, mysterious darkness fills the Cathedral of St. Peter's, and about all its splendor there hovers, as it were, a transparent mourning-veil.

The hard, stony outlines are no longer to be seen; the whole vast temple seems to be built up of shadows, and, as it grows darker and darker, more



and more vague, a sacred mystery seems to glide from the heavens to the earth.

Zinka is kneeling in the Papal Chapel between Truyn and Gabrielle, her eyes fixed upon her tightly clasped hands, as she prays with the fanaticism of a young heart whose exaltation, banished from earth, tries to find a support in heaven.

Right and left, clad in gorgeous sacerdotal vestments, sit the church dignitaries in their carved stalls; indiscreet foreigners, curious, undevout, crowd each other at their feet.

In a harshly modulated recitative the tragedy of the Passion is borne through the sacred space.

The last of the twelve candles beside the altar is extinguished. The "*Miserere mei*," resounds with awful power; then, appalling, and yet wondrous sweet, now dying away in a trembling breath, and then again rising to a terrible cry of agony, a strain breaks the great silence, giving expression, as it were, to the full anguish of the God of love at the sorrow from which it was not in His power to exempt man. Before the majesty of this great, unselfish divine grief small human woes bend the knee.

Zinka bows her head. All is over.

The last tone has died away in a sob. The crowd follows the procession which passes through the church, a cardinal at its head. Truyn and the two young girls leave the chapel and approach the portal. Behind them the steps of the procession, rendered indistinct by their own reverberation, sound



like the rushing of angels' wings. In the midst of this solemn peace Zinka's heart has fallen asleep; for the first time in many weeks she has forgotten.

"Very interesting, but the basso was hoarse."

It is Polyxena Iatinsky who pronounces this rather summary criticism of the impressive ceremony.

Zinka looks up; Sempaly, with his aunt and his cousins, is close beside her. They have witnessed the ceremony from the seats reserved for the diplomatic corps.

Involuntarily, in order to avoid a meeting, Zinka presses toward the entrance, but Gabrielle has run to meet the ladies. Remarks are exchanged; the Iatinskys are very cordial toward Zinka on this occasion; even Polyxena shakes hands with her. Sempaly alone remains at a distance.

As they leave the church, the air feels cool, almost sharp, to Zinka. She shivers. Just then she hears a well-known voice close beside her, saying rather brusquely: "You are too thinly dressed, and there is fever in the air. Throw this thing around you," and with this Sempaly places an extra wrap which he had been carrying over his arm for his cousins, on her shoulders.

"Thank you, I am not cold; the ladies will want this scarf," exclaims Zinka hastily, trying to return it to him.

Polyxena is silent, and probably finds it strange that her cousin, from anxiety for a stranger, should forget to consider whether his cousins may not be



exposing themselves to catching cold. Nini, however, cries, with her eager good-nature: "No, no, Fräulein Stertzl, we do not need it at all."

Truyn's servant, who has been looking for him, now announces that his carriage is waiting.

And while Zinka, wrapped in Nini's crèpe-de-chine shawl, and seated beside Gabrielle, drives along between the plashing fountains, then over the Bridge of St. Angelo and through the lonely, badly lit streets toward the Palazetto, all her pulses are beating anew, and the stars in the blue sky above shine with unnatural brilliancy. Her grief has risen again, and with it the dreadful alluring ghost of all the joys which she has lost. Oh, heavens! how distinctly she remembers it all! how distinctly! the long, dreamy afternoons on the Palatine, the delicious hours in the lonely Corsini gardens — there under the plane-trees, by the fountain, where he told her about Erzburg, while the fragrance of the violet and the iris rose up to them with such enervating sweetness; the sound of his voice, the touch of his light, slender hand, his peculiar way of pronouncing certain words, of looking at her on certain occasions.

She is once more wandering in the Vatican with him beside her, past the long rows of pale statues, intoxicated with beauty. Monotonous and dreamy sounds the plashing of the fountains of the Belvedere. Golden rays of light glide over the marble pavement like shining footprints which the gods left behind them when they mounted their pedes-



tals; and through the lofty corridors there resounds a mysterious rushing and whispering, as of far distant spirit-voices.

And once—it was in the garden of San Onofrio, and a soft mist, illumined by the sun, veiled the atmosphere. At their feet, wrapped in vapor, indistinct and phantom-like, as if pervaded by the spirit of dead beauty, lay Rome—Rome, the great reliquary of the world; Rome, upon whose monuments and ruins all human vices and virtues have fixed their stamp, and where the tragedies of antiquity greet the tragedy of Calvary.

They had long looked down upon it together; suddenly she had missed a little bunch of violets which she wore at her breast, and, as she was looking about for it, she noticed that he had secretly taken up the flowers, and now was pressing them to his lips. Her eyes met his.

Yes, he had loved her, truly loved her, and loved her still—she knew it. She told herself that, impulsive, excitable as he was, any chance, however trifling, might bring him back to her.

She did not ask herself whether it was worth her while to long so madly for one who was influenced by every slight breath of wind!

In the midst of the torturing phantom-dance of her love-remembrances—in the midst of the clattering of the horses' hoofs and the rattling of the wheels on the rough pavement, there rings in her ears the "*Miserere mei!*"

But it no longer turns her thoughts to the God



who died for the redemption of mankind. The strongest angels' wings cannot bear us to heaven as long as our heart draws us down to earth.

"Good-night," she said absently, kissing Gabrielle, as the carriage stopped before the Palazetto.

"Will you let me have Nini's shawl for Gabrielle," asks Truyn, retaining her. "I fear my little comrade has caught cold."

"Good heavens!" cries Zinka in alarm, and then wraps the shawl around Gabrielle with motherly care and kisses her repeatedly; "shall I ever cease to think of myself alone?" she asks herself in angry humiliation.



## CHAPTER II.

HOLY WEEK is over. The Catholic church-bells, quiescent in gloomy silence at the remembrance of the great tragedy of Mount Calvary, move anew their iron tongues. It is Easter Monday.

Representations of the Resurrection executed in the most manifold material—sugar, wax, soap, etc.—decorate the shop-windows of all the confectioners, soap-dealers, and other tradesmen of Rome. Baroness Wolnitzky has returned from Naples refreshed, in good spirits, and more enterprising than ever. Not only did she have herself photographed among the ruins of Pompeii, leaning in a poetic position against a column, but she also made the ascent of Mt. Vesuvius with the aid of two guides and an unusually sturdy mule, notwithstanding the difficulties presented by her stoutness. Thanks to the nephew of a cardinal, with whom she scraped acquaintance on the train, on the strength of the possibility of putting him to some use, she has at last succeeded in obtaining, if not an audience with the Pope, yet the permission to attend a private mass conducted by his holiness; to have the privilege of receiving the communion from his hands in company with perhaps three hundred other Catholics.



This morning she has been to the Palazetto in order to take leave of her sister Clotilde and ask a last discreet question about Sempaly, and at the same time give a detailed report of the ceremony at the Vatican and deliver an address on the philosophical significance of the communion in general.

Slava, whose Catholicism just now is beginning to verge on the fanatical, and who on Holy Saturday has heroically climbed the *Scala Santa* on her knees, completes her mother's report by the following interesting detail: "It was very exclusive; we were entirely among ourselves—only a few Polish families of high social standing. I wore my black satin dress with the jet embroidery, and I heard a gentleman behind me say: 'That lady is the only one whose veil is arranged tastefully!'"

Stertzel has not made his appearance during the call of his aunt and cousin. Zinka listens to their report with an absent smile, and Baroness Clotilde plies her sister with questions.

Then the Wolnitzkys hasten away to attend the consecration of a bishop, the invitation to which they also owe to the nephew of the cardinal, and at the close of which the ladies are to be presented with flowers and refreshments in the sacristy.

. . . . .

It was about six o'clock when the general entered the *salon* of the Palazetto. The apartment of late no longer gave the charming, cosy impression that it formerly did. The furniture was arranged with awkward symmetry according to the pedantic taste



of the footman, and the vases, formerly so picturesquely filled, now contained nothing but common bouquets of violets and magnolias. Zinka no longer thought of arranging the flowers.

"How glad I am that you have come just to-day!" she cried, when their visitor appeared; her large, shining eyes and bright red lips betrayed that she was suffering from that insupportable slow spring fever which, on mild days in April and May, causes such maddening pain to excitable young hearts.

She was sitting beside Cecil on the small crimson divan, where she had so often sat with Sempaly. Not far from them the baroness leaned back in an easy-chair and fanned herself. Her whole manner was pervaded by a sort of triumphant solemnity. Cecil, too, was evidently excited, though he appeared on that account no less natural than usual.

"How are you, general? Very unpleasant, sultry weather," lisped the baroness. "It seems incredible that you should find us *all* at home at this hour; but it is just because we all have a great horror of the crowds in the streets on a holiday afternoon."

"O mamma," Zinka interrupted, "It is not only on account of the holiday crowd that we stayed at home, but because we all wanted to enjoy our good fortune together. Is not that so, Cecil?"

He nodded and passed his hand over her head, "It is, Zini," he replied.

"Only think, uncle—you may have heard that Cecil's book on Persia has made a great sensation;



but that is not all. He has been appointed *chargé d'affaires* to Constantinople!"

The general congratulated Stertzl, and shook hands with him cordially.

"I could not have wished for a better position," said the latter; "there is a good deal to be done there, and a chance for a man to accomplish something and to rise."

He took honest pleasure in the distinction which had fallen to him, without making any pretence of arrogant indifference.

"In five years you will be ambassador," said the general, with that encouraging exaggeration which is never wanting on such occasions.

"Hardly so soon," replied Stertzl with a laugh; "but I certainly hope to make my mark in the course of time. Shall you be proud of me, butterfly," he continued, turning to Zinka, "when I am addressed as Your Excellency?"

"I am proud of you now," Zinka assured him. "You know how vain I am, and how much I think of such things."

It was the first time in months that the general had seen the brother and sister on such good terms with each other. He rejoiced thereat.

"The climate is favorable," Stertzl went on; "it is called the finest in all Europe. And there are said to be very agreeable people among the small foreign colony. It will interest you, Zini, to study Oriental matters from a bird's-eye point of view, and the change of air will do you good."



"Are you going to take me with you?" she asked, suddenly turning pale.

"Why, of course. The Bay of Constantinople is most beautiful, Zini—and we will often row out to sea, and in the fall, if I have time, we will make a short excursion to Greece. What a much-travelled little lady you will be, Zini!" He good-naturedly raised her chin with his forefinger, and looked into her emaciated face with anxious tenderness. Every trace of color had fled from it. The brilliancy which her joy at her brother's success had called to Zinka's blue eyes had faded.

"It will be beautiful," she said wearily, "very beautiful. I thank you, Cecil—you are so kind. When will we leave?"

"We can start in a week. The sea-voyage will not tire you very much; you can rest in Athens. During the hot season we will go to the mountains." Suddenly looking at her keenly, the expression of his face changed; he frowned and said almost roughly: "If you do not wish to go, you can stay here; I don't want to force you to anything."

Just then the maid appeared to say that a box had arrived from the station.

"Our new ball-dresses!" exclaimed the baroness excitedly; "I am only glad that they have come in time; I should have been in despair if we had had no new dresses for the Brancaleones' ball. It would have seemed like a slight to the princess. I wonder what novelties Fanet has invented!" With this the silly woman rustled out of the room.



In the mean time Zinka—she looked like one condemned to death who has just learned the day of her execution—continued with a ghastly smile, restlessly twisting her fingers: “Of course I wish to go, Cecil—how can you—and we can start a week from Wednesday—Wednesday will be the best day—but now I should like to look at my new dress. Don’t laugh at me, uncle! I want to make myself look as pretty as I can for my last appearance.”

With this she hurried away, knocking against a piece of furniture and throwing a book to the floor. She stopped, took up the book and opened it, put it down—then turned, laid her transparent hand on her brother’s shoulder hesitatingly, and as if she wanted to make amends for some wrong which she had done him—“Thank you,” she murmured: “I am glad, truly glad, and I am proud of you; and——”

He looked up at her; his eyes met hers, his face quivered with anger—the anger which large-hearted, unselfish, but despotic natures experience at not being able to make those happy whom they love. She was frightened at him, started, and crying, “Oh, my ball-dress!” hastened from the room.

For a while unbroken silence reigned.

Then the general asked: “Is Zinka going to the Brancaleones’ to-morrow?”

“Yes,” replied Stertzl; “at least she has promised me that she would; she may change her mind at the last moment, and stay at home, as she has done



before. Of course, I cannot tell." He drummed impatiently with his fingers on the table beside which he sat.

"Well, she seems to be anticipating it with pleasure herself this time," observed the general. "She seemed quite interested in her toilet."

"Her toilet! Why, she evidently did not know what she was talking about. She rushed from the room so that we should not see her tears," cried Stertzl vehemently, losing all self-control. Then he gave the general a gloomy look, as if he were angry at having let out a secret. But the sorrowful face of the old gentleman seemed to calm him. "There is no use in trying to keep up appearances before you," he said. "You would be blind if you had not seen how things are. All is over, general; her heart is broken!"

He started from his seat, paced to and fro a few times, then stopped, made a helpless gesture with his hand, shrugged his shoulders, and muttered: "There is no help for her—no help!" Then he sat down, and leaned his head on his hand.

The general cleared his throat and sought for a word, without being able to utter anything but, "It will all come right again; you must have patience."

"Patience!" repeated Stertzl with an indescribable expression, "patience! If I only could hope that things would come right. Look! general: at first I was vexed that she showed it so plainly; I thought she ought to control herself more. But now, good heavens! she evidently does all she can, and



that her health is being undermined—that is not her fault. If she would only fret—but no; she never complains; she is content with everything; she no longer even contradicts her mother! And then—that is the worst of all—her room is over mine—I hear her at night, walking to and fro softly, very softly, as if she were afraid of waking some one, hour after hour; and sometimes I hear her weeping; by day she never weeps!” He drew a deep breath. “And if it were only some one who was worth it,” he continued, wrathfully; “but that contemptible, unprincipled, blue-eyed scoundrel! I ought not to have taken her out of her sphere; I ought never to have let her become so intimate with him. I know very well that he never would have been worthy of her, even if, as I imagined—you may laugh at my delusion as much as you like—he had had the condescension to take the matter seriously. Oh! you don’t know what it is to meet him every day, to hear him ask again and again: ‘How are your ladies?’ It seems sometimes as if I should suffocate. I want to trample on him as if he were a worm, and yet I have to treat him civilly, and cannot even show that he has hurt me!”

Just then the baroness re-entered the room. “*Superbe!*” she said with her affected smile, “*superbe!* Zinka has never had a dress yet that was so becoming to her!”

“That is well,” remarked Cecil absently; “but where is Zinka?”

“She is lying down; she has a bad headache,”



lisped his mother; "young girls cannot bear anything nowadays. When I was her age——"

As the general was not in the mood to exchange youthful reminiscences with his affected friend, he took his leave. In the ante-room he grasped Stertzl's hand warmly. "Fortune favors you," he said; "you have a brilliant future before you; and Zinka, amid her new, agreeable surroundings, will be sure to forget. Farewell! I anticipate much for you from your new life!"

Alas! his new life!



### CHAPTER III.

THE Palazzo Brancaleone is one of the finest in Rome, and lies on the slope of the Quirinal. A particular object of admiration are its gardens, which are laid out in terraces, and can be reached directly from the first story of the palace.

Dancing was going on in a hall that was nearly square, adjoining which was a long, vaulted gallery, decorated partly with old pictures, partly with painted mirrors. Here and there the austere marble of some antique statue stood out in relief against the richly colored ornamentation of the walls. Chandeliers of exquisite Venetian glass hung from the ceiling. At the end of this hall of mirrors two steps led into a small sanctuary, divided from the remaining space by columns, which contained the choicest jewels of the Brancaleone Gallery—unfortunately in the company of various modern absurdities. From here a door led into the garden.

Zinka arrived late. A certain feverish excitement had temporarily restored to her features the freshness which they had lost, and her depressed timidity rendered her manner even more attractive than her former naïve certainty of conquest. Her new dress, too, was exceedingly becoming to her.

Evidently her former popularity had not ceased



entirely; for very soon a small circle of Roman exquisites had gathered around her. The Countesses Iatinsky even lost a few of their admirers.

Truyn was not present at the ball. The cold which his daughter had contracted during Holy Week, and which threatened to develop into a serious illness, kept him by the child's bedside.

Zinka, with her gliding movements, her head thrown slightly back, and her dreamy eyes, always looked very lovely when dancing. She created quite a sensation. The music, the festive brilliancy of the scene, the consciousness of being thought beautiful, all this raised her spirits. Searchingly her eyes glanced over the crowd—no, he was not there.

Stertzl, who stood in a doorway talking to the general, rejoiced in the small triumphs and the lovely appearance of his sister. Many prominent personages congratulated him on the distinction which had been conferred upon him. He thanked them simply and heartily. It was one of his good days. Soon after midnight he disappeared, having been summoned to the Palazzo di Venezia on important business, as the times just then were very unquiet.

Soon after he left, Sempaly made his appearance. It was generally known that he had spent the previous night in play—this was quite a new passion with him—and had lost heavily, and he looked worn and out of humor. Not very fond of dancing, he had so long delayed asking one of his pretty



cousins for the german, that both were engaged. This was apparently so indifferent to him that Nini secretly shed tears thereat.

Now, with his hands in his pockets, his eye-glass fixed in his eye, he was making malicious remarks concerning the figure of one or another of the ladies to some young men standing by him, and fancying himself in the place of the legendary savage who witnesses, for the first time, the dancing at a European ball. Suddenly he became silent. Something had attracted his attention. The band was playing a waltz, very popular at the time, entitled, "*Stringi mi.*" The air in the hall was growing heavy. It was the moment when, at a ball, the curls of the ladies commence to lengthen, and their motions, which, at the beginning of the dancing, are always somewhat stiff and self-conscious, manifest a certain yielding suppleness. There is a kind of electricity, like that before a thunderstorm, in the air, and an inward disturbance seizes upon the most indifferent spectator.

Crespigny and Zinka glided past. In the midst of the passionate excitement surrounding her, Zinka was pale and calm. She was not living in the present—she was dreaming.

Suddenly Crespigny, who waltzed very badly, collided with another couple. His feet became entangled in the train of one of the ladies, and, with his partner, he fell headlong to the floor. With impulsive inconsiderateness, Sempaly pushed through the crowd, and succeeded in raising Zinka



in advance of all others who came to her aid. Without taking the slightest notice of the critical looks turned upon him, he bent over Zinka: her old power over him had revived. Confused and dizzy, she at first hardly knew who had assisted her; with closed eyes she clung to his arm. When he whispered a few words of sympathy to her, she looked up, blushed, and was evidently startled.

“An unpleasant occurrence! Very unpleasant!” whispered some of the ladies.

In the mean time Sempaly, with gentle force, placed Zinka's little hand on his arm, and led her away from the close atmosphere of the ball-room to one of the adjoining apartments.



## CHAPTER IV.

THE chance which she had prayed for had come—the chance that brought them together again. His old feelings had revived. She read it in his eyes. She called all her self-control to aid to conceal her joy—not from calculating coquetry, but from womanly self-respect. His talk was confused, full of sentiment—she interrupted him with the most commonplace questions.

He had brought her mantle. Wrapped in the white drapery, she went from one to another of the statues whose creamy white shone out from among the palm-trees. At times she would address a word to some acquaintance whom they met. The hall became more and more deserted. The pause for supper had come; people were going to the buffet.

Zinka's cold demeanor, which he had by no means expected, excited Sempaly. He suddenly felt as if there could be nothing more blissful in the world than to fold her in his arms just once, and half smother her with kisses. All his thoughts yearned for that one rapturous moment. Beyond that he considered nothing. She must be his—at



any price, even though he and she and the whole world were lost thereby.

"Zinka," he whispered hoarsely, "Zinka, Lent is over—Easter has come!"

"What do you mean?" she asked, still controlling herself, almost harshly.

"I mean"—his burning eyes were fixed upon her face—"I mean that I have finished my penance, and that I want to be happy!"

They were now standing in the raised cabinet, divided from the main hall by two columns. They were alone. A wild joy, exaggerated to pain, came over Zinka. Happiness crept through her veins like a sweet lethargy; but she remained silent, and did not smile, nor even raise her eyes to his. She could not have smiled, even if she had wished to; she was as if paralyzed.

He, however, thought that she pretended to be deaf to his words.

"Zinka," he urged, "will you never forgive me for having rung the bells of a fool's-cap for six weeks, in order not to hear the music of the spheres? Will you not pardon me for the sake of the torments which I have undergone these past weeks? I cannot bear it any longer—I surrender at discretion—I cannot live without you!"

Her weakened body was not equal to this excitement; the fearful tension which her pride, during the last quarter of an hour, had enforced upon her nerves gave way; a tremor went through her whole frame; she groped about her with her hands, and



tottered. He supported her with one arm, and with the other pushed open a glass door which stood ajar.

"Come out here; the air will do you good," he murmured indistinctly. They went out into the lonely garden. His arm tightened around her; he drew her closer to him. Involuntarily he expected that she would release herself from him by some movement of resisting alarm; but no, she only looked up to him blissfully, with eyes streaming with tears, and whispered: "I ought not to forgive you so readily;" and, fearlessly and confidently as a sick child leans upon its mother's breast, she let her head sink down upon his shoulder and sobbed for joy. A strange feeling came over him. From below the sound of church-bells was heard.

At that he softly kissed her forehead with devout tenderness, and murmured:

"My beloved, my pearl of great price!"

She was saved.



## CHAPTER V.

WHEN the general, coming from the card-room and about to leave, threw a last superficial glance into the dancing-hall, the german, with its charmingly devised figures and favors, was nearing its end.

“What an unfortunate idea to give a ball so late in the season, at such a temperature!” was the lament heard from the ranks of the chaperones.

Among the latter he noticed the baroness, who, her glass at her eyes, was anxiously looking about the room with a very perplexed expression in her face. Siegburg, who, as the general knew, had engaged Zinka for the german, was not dancing. When the general approached him in order to ask the reason of his being at leisure, he remarked, quietly, that he “believed Zinka had not felt well, and had gone home.”

His manner of saying this caused the general to suspect that he made the remark merely to screen some imprudence on Zinka's part. He had last seen her in the hall of mirrors with Sempaly; he hastened thither to look for her. He examined all the flower-niches in vain. He entered the boudoir behind the columns; that, too, was empty, but the



glass door stood open. He began to feel alarmed. He hastened into the garden.

Outside, the air was indescribably damp and sultry. A hopeless weariness and an uneasy excitement came over him. The sirocco had cast its deathly, paralyzing spell over Rome.

. . . . .

Northerners who have never been in Rome can form no idea of the nature of the sirocco. Most of them think it is a hot wind-storm.

But no! When the air is close yet damp, with subtle, delicious odors breathed, not wafted through it, then the sirocco is mixing its poisons. It mixes them from the fragrance of the flowers which it calls to life only to destroy them; from the exhalations of the Tiber, whose yellow waves, like gold mixed with slime, rush along over the corpses and treasures buried in its depths; from the mouldering breath of the graves and the incense-smoke of the churches of Rome.

The sirocco stirs our soul with seductive illusions and fills our heart with oppressive sadness; it inspires our imagination to great deeds, and stretches our body upon a couch in voluptuous indolence. It glides even into the convent-cells. It strokes the pale cheeks of young nuns who are striving after devoutness, and recalls to them some bygone, lovely dream.

And all that is sad, all that is infamous, and much of that which is beautiful in the past of Rome has been engendered by the sirocco. It is the creator of



glorious fancies and of horrible deeds. It would almost seem that after the day when Cæsar fell by the dagger of Brutus, sirocco and tramontana had fought a last fight for the possession of Rome—and that sirocco had conquered!

. . . . .

A gray mist covered the sky, and veiled the disc of the paling moon.

The plashing of the cascade which fell from terrace to terrace, from one fountain into the next, had a dreamy sound. Pale morning was already casting its disenchanting gleams amid the magic of the moonlit night. Light and shade were blended. The coloring showed the indistinct, grayish tinge of a half-effaced pastel-painting.

The general cast searching glances into the avenues of angularly trimmed laurel-bushes which ran along the garden-slope in rows. Above the bushes rose the huge trunks of the evergreen oaks, overgrown to the branches with ivy and climbing roses. Here and there something white shone out from the dull-green. He hastened toward it—it was a statue or a flowery bush.

Roses and magnolias bent their heads as if listening. Overpowering every other fragrance, the odor of the orange-blossoms permeated the sirocco-vapor. At times there was heard among the leaves, like a slight shudder or a soft sigh, the sound of a falling blossom.

The old gentleman's breath failed him. He called: "Zinka, Sempaly!" No one answered.

.



Suddenly he heard the sound of low voices in the famous Avenue of Sarcophagi. He hastened toward it. The morning light peeped through an opening in the thick leaves. There, on a bench, sat Zinka and Sempaly, hand in hand, engaged in tender talk, and oblivious of the world about them. It was Zinka who saw the general first. She remained perfectly unembarrassed.

"O uncle!" she cried, "mamma is looking for me, I suppose! Now, don't scold me, please——"

Good heavens! the happy, innocent eyes which she raised to him! Over such purity the sirocco had no power. With her the general could not possibly be angry—but with him!

"Sempaly," he cried in indignation, "what were you thinking of?"

"I have at last made up my mind to be happy," he said fervently, raising Zinka's hands to his lips. "That is all!"

"You think I ought not to have forgiven him so readily, do you not?" whispered Zinka with bent head, intimidated by the general's stern look.

"Zinka has been missed, and you know how wicked the world is!" cried the general vehemently, paying no regard to the sentiment of the situation.

Sempaly silenced him by an impatient gesture.

"To tell the truth," he murmured reflectively, "I feel inclined to go to the ball-room with Zinka on the spot, and tell some of my most intimate



friends of our engagement." But the next moment he thought differently.

"No, I cannot," he cried uneasily; "unfortunately I cannot do it. In fact, I must request you, Zinka, to keep our engagement secret for the present even from your family."

"Make haste, Zinka," said the general dryly, "my cab is waiting in the square. If I am not mistaken, there is a gate close at hand by which you can leave the garden. Yes, here it is. I shall tell your mother, before several witnesses, that you did not feel well, and went home *before the german* with Lady Julia."

When Zinka had departed for the Palazetto in charge of the general's confidential coachman, the eyes of the two men met.

"Unpardonable!" exclaimed the general indignantly.

At this Sempaly flared up. "You may think as badly of me as you like," he cried, "but never cast even the shadow of an impure suspicion on Zinka. You know that when a cross is held in the face of the devil, his power is broken."

Without deigning to reply to him, the general passed by Sempaly, and hastened through the garden to the ball-room. He found time to lock the door from the boudoir to the garden.

In the ball-room the baroness came to meet him with the question: "Where is Zinka? Have you not seen her?" to which he answered: "Zinka did



not feel quite well after her fall—she went home with Lady Julia some time ago.” He said this as distinctly as possible, and in French, with the intention of being heard and understood by a number of people.

“You might have let me know,” remarked the baroness testily.

“We were looking for you, madame,” he replied, “but could not find you.”

For the first time in his life, he told a lie.

. . . . .

Next morning the general called on Lady Julia at a preposterously early hour, in order to initiate her into the mysteries of the past night, so that she should not by accident contradict his statements. As he himself had escorted her to her carriage, everything seemed satisfactorily arranged. Although she was quite as averse to telling an untruth as the general, she yet declared herself ready to corroborate his fiction. At the same time she said, again and again, “Poor little thing!” and “I hope it may all come right!”



## CHAPTER VI.

“DEAREST ZINKA:—My beloved, darling little sweetheart! My brother arrived last night. He is on his way to Australia, and, fortunately, will remain only a few days. As long as he is here, however, I shall be obliged to make a great sacrifice, and hardly be able see you at all, as he must have no suspicion of our engagement.

"Shall I confess to you the plain, matter-of-fact reason which induces me to conceal my happiness? During these last unhappy weeks, merely to kill time, I have been playing high, and always with the worst luck, and have run in debt accordingly. My brother will pay my debts, as he always has done, as long as things are in a normal state. But—yet—I cannot write about it. Do not believe, however, that his narrow views will have any influence on me as far as you are concerned, even if I do apparently submit to him. I consider it unnecessary to rouse his anger. But as soon as he has sailed, there will no longer be any objection to our engagement. We can marry immediately. He will yield to the *fait accompli*. If I can make it possible, I will come to the Palazetto this evening to ask for a kiss and a loving word. Till then I remain, requesting you to observe implicit silence,

"Yours devotedly, N. S."

Zinka received this letter the day after the ball, as she was breakfasting in her room, somewhat later than usual, and with the appetite of a convalescent.



She changed color. Her eyes glowed with anger. His coldness, his neglect she had borne—but the proof of paltry weakness, of moral cowardice, which his letter gave her, so lowered him in her eyes that he appeared almost contemptible.

It seemed to her as if a sudden light were cast upon his whole personality—as if she had not loved *him*, but quite a different man. The Sempaly who had won her heart was a proud young god, who, if it had so happened, might permit himself to descend from his sublime height to break the heart of a poor, insignificant young girl who in any case ought to have been happy to have met him; but he was no nervous, unprincipled weakling, who stooped to dissimulation of various kinds from fear of having to face his brother's anger. She was quite beside herself. All her pride, which of late had been sleeping, stupefied by grief, awoke again. Hastening to her writing-desk, she wrote as follows:

“I might have been capable of marrying you without your brother's consent. But I never could make up my mind to do so without his knowledge. I could defy him, but never deceive him. Do not come to the Palazetto unless you have definitely made up your mind. It is impossible for me to marry you as long as I cannot feel firmly convinced that I am more necessary to your happiness than the friendly sentiments of your brother. In the mean time I release you from all obligations to me, and shall efface from my memory, the words which your excitement led you to speak last night.

“Yours truly,           ZINKA STERTZL.”



This very categorical epistle Zinka inclosed in an envelope, and, having addressed it, she rang for her maid, and gave her the order to send the letter without delay to the Palazzo Venezia.

"Is there an answer?" asked the maid.

"No," said Zinka shortly.

Hardly had the maid disappeared when Zinka, of course, became violently excited, and almost repented of having written so angrily. She might have told him all that her answer contained without expressing it so harshly. Then she read his letter once more, contracted her delicate eyebrows, and shook her head. Suddenly her eye fell upon a second letter, which had been brought her at the same time with Sempaly's, but of which she had taken no notice at first. Now she recognized the handwriting as that of Truyn. The note contained but a few words:

"DEAR ZINKA: Gabrielle's condition has grown alarmingly worse over-night. The doctor gives very little hope. The poor child longs for you when she is conscious, and also in her delirious fancies. Come if you can.

"Your old friend,

"ERIC TRUYN.

"P. S.—The disease is not infectious; it is pneumonia."

Zinka started up. She forgot everything—her happiness, her grief, her anger, everything connected with Sempaly; she no longer thought of anything but the kindness which Truyn had always



shown her, the sorrow with which he was threatened.

“‘It is no infectious disease,’ ” she murmured to herself, “poor man! Even now he thinks of others, while—I—I”——Her cheeks burn; she is thinking of the evening in Holy Week, when the child sitting beside her in the carriage had begun to feel chilly, and she had not noticed it. “I had lost my head because he had spoken a kind word to me,” she says to herself, indignant at her weakness.

A few minutes later she is hastening breathlessly along the Corso, toward the Piazza di Spagna. Her maid has difficulty in following her hurried steps. She sees nothing that is going on around her, notices none of the passers-by, and on the Piazza di Spagna nearly runs against a group of people who are just coming out of the Hotel de Londres, and feels the touch of a soft hand on her arm. Looking up she recognizes Nini Iatinsky.

“Good-morning; where are you going in such haste?” asks the young countess pleasantly.

Zinka bows shortly, absently: “I am hurrying to the Hotel de l’Europe; Gabrielle Truyn seems to be very ill, and has asked for me.”

It is only now that Zinka notices a tall, broad-shouldered man, with proud bearing and a dark, handsome face, standing beside Nini. He is observing her with kindly discretion, and Nini introduces him to her as Prince Sempaly. Then she notices Nicholas Sempaly, too, with Polyxena. Passion glows in his eyes; nevertheless, he merely



lifts his hat with the most distant formality. Zinka gives no thought to his behavior; the meeting altogether makes no impression upon her: she only feels that she is being detained. "Pardon me, countess," she says to Nini with a winning smile, and cordially pressing her hand, without remembering in the least the social gulf between them, "poor Count Truyn is expecting me!" And with this she hastens away.

"Who is that charming girl, Nini?" asks the prince. "Of course you forgot to mention her name to me."

"A Fräulein Stertzl, the sister of one of our secretaries of legation," replies Nini.

"Stertzl?" repeats the prince, rather disenchanted.

"Zenaïde Stertzl!" cries Polyxena, mockingly, over her shoulder.

But the facetiousness with which she emphasizes the peculiar, romantically plebeian name is lost on the prince. He is a man of too high standing to make sport of insignificant people, and merely says: "Sterzl—I think I know the name. Stertzl? I served under a Colonel Stertzl in the X—Uhlans. He was a most respectable man."

Meanwhile Zinka is hurrying onward to the Hotel de l'Europe. In the sunny court two rose-bushes are in full bloom, one red, the other white; two little boys, with brown curly hair, are playing at duelling with sticks in a corner; two English families in large landaus are preparing for an excursion, and



send into the hotel again and again for something that has been forgotten. The whole court is filled with the fragrance of roses, sunlight, and cheerfulness. One of the English girls laughs aloud at something; another admonishes her in a low voice. "Hush!" she murmurs, pointing to some windows above; "remember the invalid."

Zinka's heart turns cold; she hastens up the well-known staircase. In the drawing-room sits Gabrielle's English governess—very straight, very sad, and very awkward. "May I go to Gabrielle?" Zinka asks.

"No, please wait a while; the doctor is there."

At this moment Truyn comes from the sick-room with the famous Dr. E——, the German resident physician, nods sadly to Zinka, and accompanies the doctor downstairs. His features have the white, rigid look which is seen in good, unselfish persons who are accustomed to fight out their griefs alone within themselves.

When he returns to the drawing-room and approaches Zinka, he says, taking her hand in his: "My little girl asks for you every five minutes; but"—looking dubiously at her moist eyes, her pale, quivering face—"will you succeed in hiding your anxiety for the child from her?"

"You can depend upon me," replies Zinka, bravely dashing the tears from her eyes. Two seconds later she glides into the sick-room, quiet and cheerful as a sunbeam.



## CHAPTER VII.

It was obvious that some one must have played the spy on Zinka and Sempaly during their moonlight interview, or heard of it subsequently, in spite of the general's precautions. The proof thereof was an abominable article which appeared on the Friday after the ball in a Roman journal published in French.

The article was entitled: "A Moonlight Meeting."

It commenced with an exact description of Zinka, who was introduced to its readers as Mlle. Z——a S——1, sister of one of the secretaries of the Austrian legation, recalled the sensation which she had created at the Ilsenberghs, in the Lady Jane Grey tableau, described her as a talented adventuress, a "professional beauty" of Rome, and mentioned her repeated unsuccessful attempts to secure a closed coronet—attempts which had finally culminated in a moonlight promenade which had secretly taken place at a ball given by one of the leaders of Roman society, and had surpassed in audacity everything which the *chronique scandaleuse* of Roman fashion had been able to record until now. "Will merit receive *its crown*? Will 'High Life' soon have the pleasure of announcing a *mariage dans le monde*?



That is the question." This was the conclusion of the article.

"High Life" — this was the name of the journal embellished by said charming article—was a tabooed paper, which, condemned by the whole of society, was yet taken secretly by a great portion thereof, and was read by a still greater portion—with horror and indignation, indeed, but still read.

On that fatal Friday, every copy of "High Life" was sold. Before the sun was setting, Zinka's name was in every one's mouth.

What did Rome say to the article? Lady Julia wept, drank tea, and went to bed; Mr. Ellis cried "Shocking!" assured his wife that he was convinced of Zinka's innocence, and also of her finally carrying off the victory over this slander—after which he phlegmatically turned to other things, and practised for two full hours a particularly difficult passage on the concertina.

The Brauers, the compatriots of the Stertzls previously mentioned, who had been partially received in Roman society, but were not invited to the Brancalone ball, contributed more than any one else to the spreading of the article, each one of them furnishing it with individual comments.

Madame Brauer assumed an expression of perfidious compassion, and observed that the affair was very risky for Zinka's reputation, although she herself could see no great harm in an innocent little moonlight walk with a friend. Her husband, of whom the whole Stertzl family had taken very



little notice—the baroness from pride, Cecil, however, merely because Brauer was really a thoroughly shallow, affected, and pretentious fellow—declared with the most sarcastic smile that “he had never liked the *Ste. Nitouche* manner of the little adventuress, who had boldly pushed herself into circles into which she had no right to intrude. He had always considered her conduct very improper; Duchess Brancalone must necessarily feel much mortified that so scandalous an occurrence had taken place at her house; another time she would probably be more careful in the choice of her guests.

Mesdames Ferguson and Gandry found that the article was very amusingly written—not that they approved of indiscretions like this. Under such circumstances one would have to be in fear of one’s life; in their case, to be sure, journalism would have to invent something, which was hardly necessary as far as Zinka was concerned. Moreover, they sent the article to all their friends, and assured them that “this occurrence proved how necessary it was to be cautious as to receiving a stranger into society. They had had their suspicions of Zinka from the very first, “*car, après tout, ce n’est pas du vrai monde.*”

These bold and scandalous remarks were made by the two ladies at General Klinger’s studio, which, as we have seen, was a favorite place of meeting for society—a sort of fashionable forum, and always crowded with visitors whenever there



was a particularly exciting social event to be discussed. Princess Vulpini, who was present, was highly indignant.

"I am an Austrian, ladies," she said, "and as such I have been brought up with ideas, the exclusiveness of which you can neither conceive nor grasp. I am strictly conservative in every respect. But Zinka is one in a thousand, a charming exception to which rules must give way. I should have thought it narrow-minded and foolish to deny myself, in deference to a social dogma, the pleasure which the intercourse with this lovely girl offered me."

"Exceptions always fare badly," muttered the general.

Countess Ilsenbergh, who was quite as particular with regard to matters of honor as in questions of etiquette, was most unpleasantly impressed by the article. She expressed herself very decidedly against the freedom of the press, and confessed, moreover, that, whether Zinka were guilty or innocent, matters looked very bad for Sempaly.

Count Ilsenbergh developed the most powerful eloquence, and delivered a stupendous lecture on the social question. "Our respected friend the princess is perfectly right," he said; "Fräulein Stertzl is a charming exception—if it were possible to deviate from the established rules of society for any one, it would be for her. But our friend the general is also right; exceptions invariably fare badly in this world, and we cannot menace the



whole of society in its inner core, in order to alleviate the lot of the individual. We cannot establish precedents."

He then proceeded to emphasize the terrible disorder which would arise from such a mingling of classes, referred his hearers to France, and proposed, in order to steady European society and to pacify ambitious minds, the introduction and strict observance of the East-Indian caste system.

When, upon this, his wife objected that "European society had not yet reached the summit of exclusive perfection planned by him, and that, in consequence, instead of looking so far ahead, they ought now to consider the question of the unpleasant occurrence which had originated in its present deficiencies," he observed that "the matter was quite plain: either 'High Life' had lied—then Sempaly had nothing to do but deny the article, prove an alibi, and horsewhip the editor; or, if the occurrence reported by 'High Life' was a fact, nothing remained to him under the circumstances, and in view of the irreproachable character of the young lady, but to——" He shrugged his shoulders.

"To make Fräulein Stertzl Countess Sempaly!" cried Madame de Gandry; "but I must say I find it rather too much that a young adventuress is to be rewarded for her '*dévergondage*' with a coronet of nine points! Ah, I beg your pardon, general—I had quite forgotten that you are a friend of the Stertzls!"

"And I," cried the general, who had started up



deathly pale with anger, in a trembling voice, "came within a hair's-breadth of forgetting that I had a lady to deal with!"

Princess Vulpini now spoke again: "You said yourself, countess," she remarked, "that you had from the beginning avoided a more intimate intercourse with Zinka. Well, I have seen her almost every day since she has been in Rome. I have observed her manner toward gentlemen; I have listened to her talk with other girls, and I can assure you that the word '*dévergondage*' is just about as applicable to her demeanor as it would be to that of my youngest daughter, who is only three years old! And if she really went into the garden with my cousin that night of the ball, her doing so is only a proof of imprudent enthusiasm—a proof of so high a degree of innocence, that it ought of itself to guard her against every danger. I passed last night with Zinka at the bedside of my little niece, and it is utterly impossible that any creature whose soul is darkened by an odious memory should have so pure an eye, a smile so sweet and ingenuous as hers. I would put my hand in the fire for Zinka."

The princess looked so proud, so grave, so dignified as she said these words; she measured Madame de Gandry with so contemptuous a glance, that the latter, involuntarily intimidated, muttered something incomprehensible, and withdrew with her friend Mrs. Ferguson. The four Austrians remained alone.



"What I understand least of all in the whole matter," said the princess, "is Sempaly's conduct. Immediately after this abominable paper fell into my hands, I sent for him to his lodgings in the Palazzo Venezia. My servant was told that he had just gone to drive with the Iatinskys. I drove to the Hotel de l'Europe to speak to my brother. But he was sleeping, and I had not the courage to waken him. It would have been of no avail, for he could have done nothing, and I did not wish to spoil his joy at the improvement in his child's condition. And so I came here to pour out my heart to you, general!"

"Sempaly has probably not read the article yet," was Ilsenbergh's supposition. The princess shrugged her shoulders. Countess Ilsenbergh remarked, for the last time that "the matter was very unpleasant, and she had seen it coming," after which she had great trouble in preventing her husband from delivering a second lecture, and then rose to go.

At that moment Prince Vulpini entered the studio with a radiant face. "Ah, here you are! I recognized your carriages in passing," he cried. "Do you want to hear the latest news?"

"Sempaly and Zinka are engaged!" exclaimed the princess.

"No," replied the prince, who was known for his ultra-papal opinions; "the wind blew down the Italian flag from the Quirinal last night! Long live the Tramontana!"



## CHAPTER VIII.

A FEW minutes later, the general was alone. For a moment he hesitated, then he took his hat and hastened with quick, energetic steps to the Palazetto, in order to obtain a clear view of the situation. He was at the same time one of the last who had heard of the scandalous article, and one of those who felt most deeply hurt by it. "Possibly Sempaly has come to an understanding with Zinka," he said to himself, and this thought accelerated his steps.

It was the baroness' reception-day. The foolish woman, elaborately dressed, and in a studied attitude, sat behind a table with refreshments, one hand covered with a pearl-colored glove, the other toying affectedly with its mate.

"*Voilà qui est gentil!*" she cried, as the general entered the room. All her visitors were invariably received with this stereotyped formula of welcome, which fluttered from her thin lips without the slightest variation, cool and colorless as a snow-flake.

As soon as he had greeted the baroness, the general looked about him for Zinka, without being able to find her at first. It was only when a merry voice called out to him, "Here I am, uncle! Come and give me a kiss," that he discovered her. Seated



in a dark corner of the room, reclining in a large easy-chair, she looked tired and sleepy, but very pretty and happy.

"O uncle, I am tired, tired; you can't fancy how tired!" she cried, leaning her cheek caressingly against his hand, "and that cruel mother of mine insists on my staying in the drawing-room, nevertheless, because it is her day, and so I have been dozing the whole time here in my easy-chair, because, thank Heaven, nobody has come yet. I watched with Gabrielle last night and the night before, without closing my eyes; I was so glad when my little darling would not take her medicine from any one but me, and when, last night, she finally went to sleep leaning against my shoulder, quieted by the stories I had been telling her. But for fear of disturbing her, I had to sit still for six hours without stirring, and I felt as if I had been crucified! And to-day I am all stiff and lame." With this she stretched her slender neck to the right and the left, and made a charming motion with her shoulder to express her weariness.

"You ought to go to bed," the general admonished her in a fatherly way.

"No, indeed! I have been asleep this morning. And my weariness matters very little. The chief thing is, my little invalid is out of danger. What if anything had happened to her!"

Zinka shuddered. "I cannot bear even to think of it! Count Truyn insists upon it that I have contributed to Gabrielle's convalescence, and when



I left, he kissed my hands in gratitude as if I had been the Holy Bambino itself. I laughed at him, and cried at the same time; and now my heart is so light—as light as a child's balloon, that has to be held back by a string to keep it from flying straight up to the sky. But, uncle, what makes you look so glum? Why don't you rejoice with me?"

The baroness looked at the clock, and expressed her surprise that no one had called yet.

"You are evidently nobody, uncle! no, nobody but my dear, crotchety old friend," said Zinka, with her soft laugh that had a touch of feeling in it. There was a particularly insinuating, dreamy loveliness in her manner to-day. Tears rose to the old gentleman's eyes; his heart bled for her.

At once a rapid, heavy step was heard approaching the door; the step of a man who is dragging a great misfortune with him; the door was burst open, and, yellow, panting, foam on his lips, a newspaper in his hand, Stertzl rushed into the room.

"What ails you—what has happened?" cried Zinka in great alarm.

He bent over her with a terrible look.

"Were you really in the garden with Sempaly during the german at the ball?" he asked hoarsely.

"I was," she answered, trembling—

He started, staggered, then he drew himself up to his full height, and threw the paper at her feet with a gesture of contempt for her, his butterfly, his sunbeam!



"Read that," he cried shortly, in a tone of command.

The old gentleman tried to snatch the paper from her, but Stertzl held him back forcibly. "Your delicacy is out of place here," he said in a hard voice. "*She* can read anything."

Zinka read. Suddenly she sprang up and gave a short, sharp cry; the paper fell from her hands.

Even now she did not comprehend the Alpha and Omega of the whole matter; she did not know of what she was accused; she could only understand that the article referred to something abominable, repulsive, and disgraceful.

"Cecil!" she cried indignantly, and fixed her large eyes on his, "Cecil——" And then she covered her face, that at first had turned deathly pale, but was now crimson, with both hands.

The senselessness of his suspicion at once grew clear to him; he repented bitterly of his anger, his coarseness. "Zini, forgive me; I was mad—quite mad!" he cried, and tried to take her in his arms.

But she repulsed him.

"Let me be, let me be!" she moaned; "I cannot forgive you. O Cecil! if all the papers in the world had said that you had cheated at play, do you think I should have believed them?"

He bowed his head almost humbly. "That is quite another thing, Zini," he murmured; "I do not say that to defend myself, but it is very different. You cannot understand it, because you are a child, an angel, my poor, poor, butterfly." He



drew her toward him with gentle force, and pressed compassionate kisses upon her golden hair, but she still resisted and tried to free herself from him.

"What is it all about?" asked the baroness meanwhile, for the twentieth time. As she still received no answer, she at last stooped and took up the newspaper, which lay forgotten on the floor. Her eyes fell upon the marked article, she read a part of it, and then broke out into a torrent of complaints against her daughter, enumerated all the misdemeanors of which Zinka had been guilty during her whole life, and particularly of late, and finally concluded with the words: "You will spoil Cecil's whole career for him yet."

"Be quiet, mother!" commanded Stertzl impatiently. "Who is thinking of my career now? It is our honor that we have to think of, and *her* happiness." Then, bending anxiously over his sister, who was trembling with grief and terror, he urged: "Speak, Zini; tell me exactly everything that happened."

She had released herself from him; with her arms pressed close to her breast she now stood before him; her attitude had something rigid in it, and her voice sounded flat and monotonous, while, with the most innocent conscientiousness, trembling and blushing, she gave her poor little report.

When she had finished, Stertzl drew a deep breath. "And you have heard nothing from Sem-paly since?" he asked.

"He wrote to me the next morning."



"Zinka, don't be offended; show me his letter."

She left the room, and soon returned with the letter, which she gave to Stertzl. He read it through very slowly, and evidently with the deepest attention, frowned, and asked, while slowly folding the letter: "Did you answer him?"

"Yes," she replied shortly.

"And what?"

"Very simply—that I was willing to marry him without his brother's consent, but not behind his brother's back."

In the midst of all his anguish a light of tender, brotherly pride came into Stertzl's eyes.

"Bravo, Zini!" he murmured; "and this answer he has passed over in silence?"

Zinka had to think a moment. "Yes," she said; "no, I am mistaken; he sent me a note to the Hotel de l'Europe."

"And what did he write in that?"

"I have not yet read it; it came just when Gabrielle was at the worst, and then I forgot it—but"—putting her hand in the pocket of her blue serge dress, "here it is."

Stertzl shook his head, cast a peculiar glance at his sister, and opened the note. It ran as follows:

"My happiness, my treasure, my darling, angry, proud little sweetheart! Immediately on receiving your wild letter, I rushed to see you. The concierge told me that you were not at home, but at the sick-bed of your friend Gabrielle. I, of course, cannot venture to disturb you while you are with that poor



child, although just to-day I would willingly give several years of my life for a glance and a kiss from you. Rather than lose you, I will give up everything at once. Command, and I will obey. But no, I must have prudence for us both, after all; I must wait until my affairs are settled. I cannot do otherwise; forgive me. I kiss your hand and the hem of your dress. I am not worthy of you, but I love you boundlessly.

“SEMPALY.”

When Stertzl had finished reading this exceedingly characteristic epistle, he walked up and down the room a few times with heavy steps, and finally stopped before his sister, took her hand, kissed it and said: “Forgive me, Zini; I am proud of you; you have behaved like an angel, but he—he is a miserable scoundrel!”

She could not bear that. “I do not wish to defend him,” she cried in a loud voice; “but one thing is certain: he loves me, and *understands* me. He would *never* have doubted me—and——”

But she sought in vain for anything else that she might say in his favor—she could find nothing. Then, with a severe effort, she gathered her pride together, and, with raised head, went toward the door. When it had closed behind her, she could be heard sobbing bitterly.

The baroness prepared to follow her. Stertzl intercepted her.

“Where are you going?” he inquired sternly.

“To speak to Zinka. I must explain to her what



harm she has done. Unpardonable! I had more tact than she when I was thirteen."

Stertzl smiled very bitterly. "That is quite possible, mother," he said; "nevertheless, I beg of you, decidedly, to leave Zinka alone for the present; she is suffering deeply enough as it is."

"Are we to let her indiscretion pass without even reproving her for it!" protested the baroness.

"Yes, mother," he replied firmly, "it is not for us to reproach her; it is for us to protect and comfort her."

The servant announced dinner. Stertzl urged the general to dine with them, having, as he said, various matters to talk over with him yet. He evidently wished to avoid being alone with his mother. Before seating himself at the table, he went to Zinka's room to see if she would not at least take a cup of broth, but he soon returned, much disturbed. "She would not even speak to me," he said; "she is quite beside herself."

At table he sat in silence, ate nothing, drank but little, crumbled his bread, and twisted his napkin into all manner of shapes.

Every time that the house-door opened, he turned his head, listening. The meal was finished quickly and perfunctorily. As the party were taking coffee in the drawing-room, the servant brought Stertzl a letter. He took it hastily, examined the address minutely, without recognizing the handwriting, and finally opened it. It contained nothing but half a sheet of paper, upon which a



frivolous caricature had been sketched with a few sharp strokes—Stertzl as an auctioneer, a hammer in one hand, a small doll in the other; in front of him the closed coronets of Rome.

Stertzl recognized himself at the first glance, and even though the clumsiness of his figure was ridiculously exaggerated and his whole person was represented in the most grotesque manner, he only shrugged his shoulders and remarked indifferently: "People really seem to think that such a thing as this could hurt me now. Look for yourself, general. I suppose Sempaly is the creator of this masterpiece!"

Of course the general would have preferred to destroy the sketch before Stertzl could comprehend its meaning; but ere he could carry out his intention, the latter looked over his shoulder and suddenly snatched the paper from him. "There is something written here," he said, trying to decipher the words crowded into a corner in Sempaly's careless, illegible handwriting: "'Mlle. Stertzl going—going—gone!' Ah! now I understand!"

The blood rushed to his head; he breathed loudly and with difficulty.

"It was contemptible to send you this!" cried the general. "Sempaly drew the silly thing before he knew Zinka; I was present when he did it!"

"What difference does that make?" replied Stertzl. "The thing remains the same after all. So this is the view which was taken of the situation. People were not so wrong, after all; I did look for



a brilliant match for Zinka. Well, I meant well; but—I have made us all ridiculous and I have ruined my sister!”

His restlessness became unbearable. He paced to and fro incessantly, stopped suddenly, went to the open window, put his head out to listen, and again paced to and fro.

“Sempaly is incomprehensible to me,” he murmured—“utterly incomprehensible. I have had a very low opinion of his character for some time, but I should not have thought him capable of such baseness and such cruelty. What do you suppose is the cause of his keeping out of sight to-day?”

“He may not have seen the paper at all,” conjectured the general; “he has gone on an excursion with his brother and his cousins.”

“Well, even if we suppose that he has not read the article,” said Stertzl; “it still seems very singular that, as matters stand between him and Zinka, he should let two days pass without making an attempt to see her.”

The general was silent.

“Hm! You know him better than I,” Stertzl resumed after a while, “and as Zinka said, you were present at a part of this moonlight betrothal scene. Do you think he has the intention of—marrying Zinka?”

“I know that he is madly in love with her; and even the Ilsenberghs, who talked over the matter in my presence with Princess Vulpini, cannot see how he can avoid offering her his hand, whether



his heart prompts him to do so or not," replied the old gentleman evasively.

"*Vedremo!*" murmured Stertzl. He looked at his watch. "Half-past nine!" he exclaimed. "The matter grows more and more incomprehensible to me. I think I will go to the Palazzo Venezia once more; perhaps his servant knows where he is, or when he will be back. Wait for me here, I beg of you, general;" and, in a very low voice, he added: "Keep my mother away from Zinka; the excitement would be too much for the poor child."

He hurried away. Half an hour later he returned.

"Well?" asked the general.

"He went to Frascati with the prince, the Iatinskys, and Siegburg at one o'clock," replied Stertzl gloomily. "When I asked the servant if he was coming back to-night, he answered: 'Certainly, for the count is going away with his highness to-morrow at eleven o'clock.' It is quite plain he has delayed declaring his engagement for fear of a scene with his brother; he is going to leave town for fear of a scene with me. 'High Life' lay on the table unfolded!"

They heard the rustling of a light dress. They turned; behind them stood Zinka, with disordered hair and frightened, listening eyes that were swollen with weeping.

"Zinka!" cried Stertzl, hastening to her in dismay. Her eyes grew vacant, she swayed, groped about her with her hands, and fell fainting into his arms. He pressed her golden head caressingly to his shoulder and carried her away.



## CHAPTER IX.

SEMPALY had an extraordinarily irritable nervous system and a very sensitive ear, and in consequence thereof an extreme aversion to scenes connected with excitement and loud words. Besides, he had the habit, often peculiar to spoilt children of Fate, of putting off unavoidable disagreeable matters indefinitely, in the hope that something unexpected would occur to smooth the way.

His affection for Zinka was thoroughly genuine—passionate and tender at the same time. Far from weakening, it had rather increased in strength during the last few days. While the moonlight hour spent in dreamy and innocent talk with him had momentarily calmed Zinka's longing, it had on the contrary heightened that which he felt; and while his cowardly, deceitful conduct had lowered him in Zinka's ingenuous eyes, her simple, proud demeanor had heightened the charm which she exerted over him.

He suffered deeply, but this did not prevent him from calmly allowing his good-natured elder brother to pay his enormous debts, nor from continuing apparently to pay his court to his cousins, in order to propitiate that same kind, honest brother.

It may, however, be said in his favor that he



did not do the latter so much intentionally as instinctively, because, being subject to an unconquerable desire to make himself agreeable, he could not resist doing all in his power to create a pleasant impression among those in whose company he happened to be, even though he could not reconcile it to his conscience to do so.

If he could only once have spoken to Zinka during these three days, affairs might have taken a very different turn. He would probably have easily succeeded in regaining, through the almost irresistible charm of his personality, the ground which he had lost with her; possibly she, by her proud integrity, would have induced him to act in a straightforward manner. But he could not disturb Zinka while she was at the bedside of her little sick friend, and he felt little inclined to seek an opportunity for a dry explanation with Stertzl. So he let one hour after another pass, until Friday forenoon, when, at his rooms in the Palazzo Venezia, the unlucky paper came to his hands, addressed to him in a disguised handwriting. He became vehemently excited; he was on the point of rushing off to the Palazetto, when he remembered that his brother was coming for him at one o'clock to go on an excursion to Frascati. He had dipped his pen in the inkstand to write a note cancelling his engagement, when there was a knock at the door, and, though it was half an hour earlier than the time agreed upon, his brother and his two cousins entered the room.



"What a surprise—what an honor!" exclaimed Sempaly, somewhat taken aback.

"I should think so," said Polyxena with a laugh. "there is a strong smell of Turkish tobacco in your rooms, but their general effect is very pretty."

In the mean time, Nini, with her timid, fawn-like eyes, was looking about her quietly and attentively. It is a well-known fact that a bachelor's quarters is one of the interesting mysteries with which the inquisitiveness of young ladies is wont to busy itself.

"The girls insisted on seeing your den," exclaimed the prince gayly, "and so I had to bring them up here, *nolens volens*, while Siegburg is entertaining mamma below."

"You proposed it yourself, Oscar," cried Nini.

While Sempaly, with a low bow, said gallantly, "From this moment these rooms are consecrated!"—the number of "High Life" was lying on his writing-table, and an iron hand seemed to be holding his heart in its grasp within his breast. If his brother had only come up alone—but with the two girls! The situation was truly unfortunate.

Xena, with roguish audacity, began to examine his bric-a-brac, opened his books; ventured, laughing, to approach his writing-table, and stretched out her slender hand for the "High Life."

"Halt!" cried Sempaly; "that is nothing for you, Xena."

"*Non toccare*," said the prince, laughing good-naturedly; "it is not advisable for so youthful a lady



as you to investigate the objects in a bachelor's den too closely; before you know it, you may have hold of a scorpion. But we must not keep mamma waiting any longer. Get ready, Nicki."

Sempaly at first sought for some excuse; then he bethought himself that it was really not worth while to embitter Oscar's last hours; that the matter might, after all, be adjusted in some other way. He begged permission to write a hasty note, and in fact dashed off a short epistle to Stertzl, in which he made a formal offer for Zinka's hand. This letter he gave to the concierge as he left the house, ordering him to take it up to the secretary's office.

At first he was quite contented with himself, but the farther the afternoon advanced the more uneasy he became, chiefly on account of the frequent affectionate glances which the prince cast alternately on him and Nini. He felt more and more as if he were being pushed into a blind alley. In the Villa Aldobrandini he took a last precaution. By the great fountain he suddenly found himself alone with Nini, probably owing to the readiness of the rest of the party to give him an opportunity for a *tête-à-tête* with the young lady. This favorable moment he took advantage of to relieve his heart. He called her his sister, confessed to her his secret engagement, and begged her to be Zinka's friend. Nini, who felt as if a dagger had been thrust into her bosom, was very brave, and of course took pains, as any other noble woman would have done, if only for fear of betraying the state of her heart,



to express a satisfaction in his engagement which it was not possible for her to feel.

He kissed her hand with emotion, and remained constantly by her side.

The prince, who noticed these secret conferences between the young couple, smiled knowingly, and joyfully communicated his observations to Countess Iatinsky.

Endowed with a large, warm heart, but entirely wanting in delicacy of perception, he was unable to comprehend of what a young man could be talking to a girl so mysteriously and at the same time so tenderly, if not of his love for her.

The day passed. With a degree of imprudence of which only foreigners are guilty in Rome, the party started for home very late, and reached the Hotel de Londres only shortly before ten o'clock. Here it was that Nemesis overtook Sempaly.

At the end of the supper, which the party partook of in the Iatinskys' apartments, and during which the mysterious confidences between Sempaly and his cousin were continued, the prince, with a smile which betrayed the most intense pride in his shrewd power of divination, raised his glass and cried: "Let us drink to the health of our betrothed couple!"

Nini turned crimson, Sempaly very pale. He had reached the end of the blind alley. Crowded to the wall, nothing was left to him but to turn and face the enemy whom he could not escape. He was seized by an irresistible impulse to tear the odious mask from his face.



"What betrothed couple do you allude to?" he asked.

"Well, don't be so mysterious, Nicki," cried the prince cordially; "to you and——" A glance at Countess Nini silenced him.

"To me and Fräulein Zinka Stertzl!" said Sempaly emphatically, and blurting the words out angrily.

The blood rushed to his brother's head; for a moment he was dumb with indignation and dismay; Countess Iatinsky's face wore a perplexed smile, Polyxena's lip curled scornfully, and Nini held out her hand to her good-for-nothing cousin, and assured him: "Zinka will always find a friend in me."

But now the prince's indignation burst forth; he fairly raved—swore that he would never give his consent to such a preposterous marriage; could not comprehend how his brother, at his age, could have got such boyish nonsense into his head. The ladies withdrew. Sempaly, whose nature, formerly so vacillating, had suddenly congealed to a sort of icy defiance, sent a waiter for a copy of the fatal number of "High Life." But when the prince had read the scandalous article, his first word was: "A pretty state of things there would be in the world, if every man who allows himself to be deluded into an act of imprudence by some pretty adventuress had to pay for it by marrying her!"

At the insulting epithet which his brother applied to Zinka, Sempaly started up. He did not spare himself in the least; with the most unre-



served candor, with complete objectivity, and keen eloquence, he pleaded Zinka's cause against himself. Selfish, nervous, morally and physically pampered though he was, there was yet nothing low in him. He now could find no limit to his self-accusation: it seemed to him as if he could efface, by the invectives which he heaped upon himself more and more liberally, the mean acts of which he had been guilty for the last few days. He told everything—that he had loved Zinka from the first moment; that he had been on the point of offering her his hand, and had been prevented only by an accident which had hurled him just in time from the heaven of his enthusiasm. He told how he had neglected her, and had tried, by his constant intercourse with his fair cousins, to erect a barrier between Zinka and the longing of his heart; how he had met her unexpectedly at the Branca-leone ball; and how, when he suddenly held her in his arms after raising her from her fall, passion had come over him like an evil power—ay, he told everything, up to the moment when she laid her head upon his shoulder. “To such innocence one must bow the knee,” he concluded, “and that all I have said in her favor is not exaggerated, can be proved to you by all Rome. Ask whom you will, Marie Vulpini, Truyn, even the Ilsenberghs themselves—Siegburg here.”

The prince turned to the latter: “I cannot understand this matter in the least. Is that which he says of the girl true, or is he raving?”



Siegburg's answer was simple, warm, and clear. As is well known, it is difficult for a young man to praise a beautiful girl in an unsuspecting manner. The testimony which Siegburg gave for Zinka was a little masterpiece of enthusiasm restrained by tact and subdued by respect.

The prince's face grew darker and darker. "I suppose the young lady is the same one whom we met on the Piazza di Spagna?" he asked.

"Yes," replied Sempaly.

"She is the sister of the secretary of legation, to whom the ambassador introduced me yesterday, and the niece of my old colonel?"

"Yes."

"According to what you all have told me, she is not only a young person of irreproachable character, but a general favorite."

"She is."

The prince was silent for a moment. He was rooted with all the fibres of his being in the customs of the caste in which he had been born, for which he had been educated. A union between a Fräulein Stertzl and a Sempaly was for him a monstrosity. He possessed in the highest degree a reverence for traditions, that which Count d'Alton-Shée calls "*le respect des ruines*," but the ruins had to be grand and beautiful, else they made no impression upon him.

With his head in his hand, he still sat at the supper-table, which had not been cleared, and on which the light sparkled in the half-emptied cham-



pagne-glasses, and the bouquets which had been prepared for the ladies still lay beside their plates. Suddenly he raised his head, and pointing to "High Life," he asked:

"Had you read this article when we called on you in the Palazzo Venezia?"

"I had."

The prince drew himself up to his full height. "And you did not remain in Rome to defend the girl?" he asked. His great black eyes fastened themselves upon the blue eyes of his brother. "You went with us to Frascati, you exposed the reputation of this young lady for a whole day to the greed for scandal of all the evil tongues of Rome, in the fear of a disagreeable explanation with me, in dread of a few angry words on my part! You have behaved in this affair from beginning to end, in the most unprincipled manner both toward this young girl and toward our poor darling in there," pointing to the door behind which the countess and her two daughters had disappeared. "I shall, of course, not let you starve. Your allowance will be paid to you as heretofore, but otherwise all is over between us. We cannot understand each other, you and I. You may go!"



## CHAPTER X.

ALAS! the "something unexpected," which Sempaly had waited for, had not presented itself!

The dreaded scene between the brothers, though delayed for some hours, had come to pass after all; and Sempaly, by his dilatory, equivocal demeanor, had gained nothing further than that, instead of merely rousing his brother's anger, he had also drawn upon himself his contempt, and that his projected marriage with Zinka, when he finally found himself obliged to declare his engagement with her to his brother, had sunk from a romantic, sensation-creating love-match—a piece of erotic knight-errantry, as it were—to that tamest of unions, a "*mariage de conscience*."

With the recollection of the disagreeable scene as well as the torments of a sleepless night resulting from it still in every fibre of his body, weary of turning his head to the right and left on his pillow without being able to close his eyes, Sempaly rose earlier than usual the next morning.

At war with himself, touched and surprised at the proud generosity of his brother, mortified by the thought of the humiliations which he had drawn upon Zinka by his dilatory silence, he was in that



state of excessive irritation in which we try to throw a portion of our own responsibility upon every one we meet, and would like to make every one suffer for the torments which we ourselves feel.

Waiting for his breakfast, he was pacing to and fro in his sitting-room, which was half *salon* and half smoking-room, when the general entered.

For the first time in his life he greeted the old gentleman ungraciously. "Good-morning," he cried; "to what do I owe the pleasure of so early a call from you?"

"Well," replied the choleric old soldier, controlling himself with difficulty, "you will hardly be surprised to hear that, as Fräulein Stertzl's godfather and friend of long standing, I have come to ask the reason of your singular conduct toward her."

"I should think that was Stertzl's affair rather than yours," replied Sempaly brusquely.

"It is just because I wish to prevent too violent a collision between you and Stertzl that I have come here so early to-day," replied the general, who was evidently more of a cavalry officer than of a diplomat. "Stertzl is furious, and as I am convinced that, at bottom, your intentions with regard to the young lady are honorable, I thought——" At that moment his eyes fell upon a small valise, such as young gentlemen of elegant tastes are wont to carry with them on even their shortest excursions, which lay, fully furnished, on a lounge. "Are you going away?" asked the general in surprise.



"I had the intention of accompanying my brother to Ostia to-day, and returning to-morrow morning; but I shall not do so now; I have quarrelled with my brother—my good, noble brother; and we can never be friends again. Are you satisfied?" He stamped his foot.

"Am I to blame for your former indiscretions, which necessitated this falling out?" retorted the general angrily.

Just then there was a sharp knock at the door, and in answer to Sempaly's short "*Avanti!*" Stertzl entered the room. Without taking the hand which Sempaly carelessly extended to him in greeting, he pulled a newspaper from his pocket, opened it, held it out to Sempaly, and asked, in a harsh tone: "Have you read that article?"

"I have," muttered Sempaly testily, between his teeth.

"Before you went to Frascati yesterday?" continued Stertzl.

This almost literal repetition of his brother's question awakened in Sempaly the most unpleasant and humiliating recollections of the scene of the day before. His eyes flashed angrily and he remained silent.

Stertzl no longer knew himself. All the bitterness which the past six weeks had poured into his heart was fermenting within him, and suddenly his eyes, too, fell upon the unlucky valise. He shot beyond the mark.

What happened then? . . .



A flash like lightning passed before the general's eyes, unexpected and inevitable.

Stertzl took a step forward, and struck Sempaly a blow in the face with the accursed journal.

At the same moment the servant entered the room with the breakfast-things.

A few minutes later Stertzl and the general, silent as death, and without looking at each other, descended the stone stairway of the Palazzo Venezia together.

Outside, in the Piazza, the young diplomat stopped a moment and took a deep breath.

"Sempaly will send me his seconds in the course of the forenoon," he began; "I must ask you to act on my part."

The general nodded his head in silence.

"I will let Crespigny know, too," Stertzl continued, "and then you may arrange matters as you like."

The general did not reply. His silence irritated Stertzl. "I could not bear any more," he murmured, as if delirious; "you think—too hasty—after all!"

They had reached the Corso, when Siegburg came toward them, lively and cheerful as usual, with his hat pushed carelessly back from his forehead.

"Glad to be the first to congratulate you, Stertzl," he cried.

"On what?" asked Stertzl shortly.

"Why, on your sister's engagement to Sempaly. Haven't you heard of it yet?"



Stertzl was completely bewildered. "What are you talking about?" he stammered. "I don't understand you."

"Is it possible that you do not know about it?" began Siegburg. "The bomb exploded last night—that is, Nicki declared his engagement to us. Oscar, to whom the whole thing was new—let us go into this *café* for a few minutes; I'll tell you all about it there; there are certain things that can't be talked about in the street."

"I—I have no time," muttered Stertzl with dull, fixed eyes; and with that he shot past Siegburg with quick, hurried steps. He walked unsteadily, and several times came into collision with passers-by.

"What's the matter with him?" asked Siegburg, following him with his eyes. "I wanted to give him a pleasure, and now—well, some people are hard to understand. This engagement will make a sensation in Vienna, eh, general? But I approve of it—approve of it entirely. We are on the threshold of a new era, as Schiller—or who was it? perhaps Bismarck—has said, and we can say to our children: 'We were there at the time!' But what ails you both, you and Stertzl? *Ça!* You had just come from the Palazzo Venezia. Is it possible that Stertzl and Nicki, through a misunderstanding, have had a collision?"

The general gave a brief assent.

"Too bad! But that can easily be smoothed over now," remarked Siegburg in consolation.



## CHAPTER XI.

WHEN Stertzl reached the Palazetto he found the letter which Sempaly had written before leaving for Frascati. The *concierge*, according to his orders, had sent it to the secretary's office; but as Stertzl had not gone to the legation on that day, the letter had lain there until the next morning, when it had been forwarded to his residence. When the latter had read it his head sank upon his hands.

Shortly after he received a call from Sempaly's seconds, Siegburg and an *attaché* of the Russian legation.

. . . . .  
No, it could not be smoothed over; the "*point d'honneur*," under the circumstances, did not admit of any amicable adjustment of the affair. What is the "*point d'honneur*"? A social prejudice which is a part of *bon ton* and the religion of the nobleman.

Prior to his final departure for Constantinople Stertzl was to go on business of the embassy to Vienna, leaving by the eleven o'clock train that same night. In consequence of this it was imperative that the matter should be settled that day. Aside from appointing the time for the duel, Stertzl left all the arrangements to his two seconds, General Von Klinger and Crespigny.



"Swords, 7 P.M., in the ruined church opposite the tomb of Cecilia Metella," was the agreement.

It was after six when the three, Stertzl and his two seconds, left the Palazetto. After passing through the dark, murky labyrinth of streets which leads to the Forum, the carriage rolled along the foot of the Palatine, past the Coliseum, through the Arch of Constantine into the Appian Way, on and on between gray walls with a greenish tinge, over which brown ruins and tall black cypress trees looked down upon the passers-by.

The walls disappeared; thick green hedges interwoven with luxuriant creepers lined the road. With its sweet yet solemn melancholy, with its baneful beauty of blooming orchids and asphodels, which, like a wild, delirious dream, hovers every spring over its desolate monotony, the Campagna spread its green carpet over the plain.

Stertzl sat in silence on the back-seat of the carriage, opposite his seconds. He did not take the trouble to make a display of courage. Very brave men often face death with indifference, hardly ever with levity.

Death, after all, is a magnate to whom reverence is due.

Something oppressed Stertzl; but his two friends, who were acquainted not only with his character, but also with the circumstances connected with the duel, knew that that something was not anxiety for his own fate.

No! He could not banish from his mind the



misfortune which he alone had brought about by his unbridled temper, his want of self-control. It did not occur to him that this betrothal, enforced by a series of indiscretions and accidents, could hardly have led to a harmonious marriage. He had forgotten Sempaly's faults. He remembered only one thing: his sister might have had the moon for her own, and he, *he alone*, had defrauded her of this ideal happiness!

A wondrous fragrance emanated from the orchids, from the blooming hedges, from the tender foliage of the trees. It permeated the atmosphere as if it were the lovely soul of spring, and bore sweet reminiscences of youth to the heart of the man who sat there, brooding gloomily. He thought of the large, neglected orchard in Alinkau, his parents' estate, of a morning in the last month of May which he had spent there before he entered the Theresianum. The old apple-trees were clad in their rosy garment of blossoms. Butterflies hovered about in the air, and the first forget-me-nots were in bloom among the blackberry bushes on the banks of the brook, which glided, murmuring sleepily, straight across the orchard, overshadowed by a row of stunted alders. The air was filled with fragrance, from the ground, from the trees, from the blossoms, just like to-day; and Zinka, who was quite a little child at the time, came tripping up to Cecil, and said, quite confidentially and with great importance:

"God must have left the door of heaven open;



that's the reason it smells so good here—don't you think so?"

She wore a white long-sleeved apron, and had long golden hair, and clung to her big brother so trustingly with her delicate, helpless little fingers. And he took her in his arms and answered: "Yes, Zini, God left the door of heaven open, and you slipped out, you darling little angel!" Oh, the big, wondering eyes with which she looked at him upon this!

She had always been his darling; his father had commended her to his care on his death-bed, and now—— "Poor little butterfly!" he murmured to himself in an undertone.

"Do not spare him too much," a deep voice said to him. It was Crespigny, who recalled him from the dreams which had taken him back to his youth and his home. "Do not spare him too much. You have everything in your favor—practice, skill, and force! Sempaly, however—I know his style of fencing thoroughly—has one extremely dangerous quality; you never know what to expect from him!"

Stertzl looked over his shoulder. The tomb of Cecilia Metella, the end of their journey, loomed up before him.



## CHAPTER XII.

OPPOSITE the Metella Tomb, with its stern heathen grandeur and its mediæval fortifications, there stands, half-destroyed, wholly deserted, a ruin in primitive Gothic style, which has the blue sky for a roof. A weather-beaten cross, set in the decaying masonry above the crumbling portal, designates it as a church of the time of early Christian enthusiasm. Opposite the entrance a vaulted recess, still perfect, shows the place where the altar stood. No decoration whatever—not even the smallest trace of a bas-relief—is to be seen anywhere. Only delicate ferns, soft, emerald-hued maiden-hair cling to the decaying walls. The ground inside is level like that of a parquered floor, and covered with fine turf, from which in spring many thousands of speckled red-and-white daisies smile up to the sky. In the corners and along the foot of the walls, a luxuriant growth of blind nettles send up a musty odor.

When Stertzl and his friends entered the ruin, their opponents were already on the spot. Sem-paly was talking calmly, but without forced levity, with the Russian *attaché*, and greeted the others on their appearance with grave courtesy. His bearing was perfect. With all his capricious



vacillations of character and fits of nervousness, he yet possessed, when necessary, in the highest degree, the imperturbable mental discipline of a man of the world, with whom it is quite as much a matter of course that he should fight a duel on certain occasions as that he should take off his hat on others.

Siegburg was constantly charging color; the others were all perfectly self-possessed.

Some of the gentlemen examined the premises and the immediate neighborhood, in order to guard against uncalled-for listeners. All was still as death. The "*vigna*" behind the church, having recently been devastated by fever, was deserted.

The necessary formalities were quickly concluded. Sempaly and Stertzl had divested themselves of their coats and vests, and stood at the places marked out by their seconds.

The latter gave the signal. "Go!" resounded through the stillness, followed immediately by the click of the meeting swords. Whoever has experienced the excitement of a slowly approaching, distinctly defined danger will remember how, when the dreaded decisive moment has arrived, the tension of the nerves suddenly relaxes, the uneasiness vanishes, anxiety dies out, and the whole life of the soul is concentrated in a breathless curiosity.

This was the case with the general and Siegburg.

They followed the duel with an interest which was almost cold.

Sempaly had made the first start, and that with some vehemence. Stertzl kept himself strictly on



the defensive. He had the German habit of occasionally enforcing his thrusts with the weight of his whole body, which, together with his skill in other respects, gave him a terrible advantage over an opponent who was physically weaker than he. The consciousness of his superiority seemed at first to paralyze him. The duel became intensely interesting from a purely technical point of view. Sempaly developed a fabulous agility, which made it impossible, as Crespigny had said, ever to know what to expect from him, but which glanced off from Stertzi's iron imperturbability. The latter evidently counted on tiring out his opponent, and then closing the combat with a slight injury. His sword entered Sempaly's shoulder, but the latter made no account of the wound; "It was nothing," he said. After a short intermission the combat began anew.

Sempaly began to look pale and exhausted; his thrusts became short, sharp, and vehement. Stertzi's face, on the other hand, grew more animated. Like every lover of fencing in a prolonged combat, he had warmed up, and was fighting as if he were in a fencing-hall, without considering the result of his actions. Affairs looked bad for Sempaly.

Suddenly the death-like silence was broken by a thin, shallow boy-soprano singing at a distance:

*"Vieni Maggio, vieni primavera."*

Stertzi started; he thought of the evening when Zinka had sung that *stornello* to Sempaly. The



romantic trait which was so closely intergrown with his nature burst its bounds. He lost his composure; for fear of injuring Sempaly he forgot to guard himself, and suddenly, as if he had never had a sword in his hand, awkwardly exposed himself completely. The seconds tried to interfere—it was too late.

With the hardly audible sound made by hard steel in penetrating the flesh, Sempaly's sword entered his opponent's side; Stertzl's yellow flannel shirt was dyed with blood, his eyes became fixed, the weapon fell from his hand; he took a step forward, then another, and then sank to the ground unconscious. The duel was ended,



## CHAPTER XIII.

FIFTEEN minutes later a temporary bandage had been applied, and in the landau, closed now, where a bed had been prepared for the wounded man, as well as feasible, by pushing the cushions between the seats, the general, supporting Stertzl, who was moaning unconsciously, drove back to Rome with him and the doctor, slowly—slowly.

Twilight spreads over the Campagna; from time to time the general casts a look out of the carriage to see how near they are to the city. The street of tombs grows more and more lonely and weird. Once a cart with peasants from the Campagna, singing loudly, rattles past; farther on a couple of monks, clad in white, are standing before a church, holding torches that cast a reddish glare around them; then the street is empty. Black as pitch the cypresses loom up against the pale evening sky, and the Campagna grows gray. They pass beneath the Arch of Constantine, the horses' hoofs clatter noisily on the pavement. Slowly—slowly.

The drowsy street-lanterns of Rome blink out into the pallid evening atmosphere. The carriage has reached the Corso. It is the hour when, almost wholly cleared of vehicles, that thoroughfare is



filled with lounging idlers. Bright light shines from the *cafés*. The closed landau, rolling along so slowly, attracts attention. The loungers collect in groups and whisper to each other as the carriage is passing. The latter has reached the Palazetto and turns into the portal. The general and the doctor alight. The concierge comes out of his lodge, his dog jumps up against the general and barks aloud. "Quiet!" cries the old gentleman, "quiet!" The servants come rushing down the stairs, the women sob, and again, only more peremptorily and more impressively, the general cries, "Quiet, be quiet!" as if it mattered anything now whether Zinka learns the great misfortune which has befallen her a minute sooner or later.

With difficulty they carry the large body up the stairs; their heavy, stumbling steps resound through the silence.

Suddenly they hear Zinka's voice uttering a startled ejaculation, then a harsh reprimand from the baroness; the doors fly open, and Zinka rushes to meet them. A broken, half-stifled cry breaks from her lips—a cry like that by which we try to rouse ourselves from an evil dream!

. . . . .

Sadly they repulsed the women and carried him to his room. While they were still busied around his bed, the servant showed Dr. E——, the German consulting physician previously mentioned in these pages, into the sick-room. He had been sent by



Sempaly, who, driving quickly, had reached Rome a full hour earlier than the general with the wounded man. With the most minute attention, Dr. E—— examined the patient, bandaged the wound with his accustomed skill, wrote a prescription, and ordered ice-compresses. At the door of the sick-room the ladies were anxiously awaiting his verdict; he pressed their hands sympathizingly in passing, and assured them, with the benevolent, hope-encouraging smile to which he owes the greater part of his extensive practice, that the night would be quiet.

But in the presence of the general, who accompanied him downstairs, the smile disappeared.

“Is the wound dangerous?” asked the old gentleman with a beating heart.

The doctor shook his head. “Are you a relative of the patient?” he inquired.

“No, but a very old friend.”

“The wound is fatal,” said Dr. E——. “I may be mistaken—I may be mistaken—Nature works wonders sometimes, and the patient is splendidly organized. What muscles! I have hardly ever seen anything like it—but, as far as human foresight goes——” He made a gesture which signed Sterzl’s death-warrant unmistakably. “It will be some consolation for the relatives, at any rate, to know that everything has been done which could have averted the catastrophe,” he continued; “I will come again to-morrow to see how matters go on. You had better send that prescription to the



pharmacy of the French legation; it is the most reliable. Good-night!"

With these words he entered his carriage, which was awaiting him at the door.

The general gave the prescription to the concierge. Obliging and with a truly Italian freedom from airs, the man rushed away without his hat to have it made up. As if the matter had been pressing!

Having composed himself with difficulty, the old soldier returned to the sick-room. Zinka, trembling with fear, stood at the foot of the bed, pale and tearless, in an almost humble attitude. The baroness paced to and fro, sobbing violently, and alternately wringing her hands and pushing her hair off her temples. She of course overwhelmed the general with questions regarding the physician's diagnosis. His evasive answers sufficed to fill her with the most unreasonable hopes, and to revive anew the instinct of worldliness which the anxiety for her son had subdued for a while. "Yes, yes," she whimpered, "the night will be quiet; all will come right yet. It would be too hard if such a brilliant career should come to an end—but he will have to give up Constantinople for the present."

Zinka had grown still paler at the general's words, but she remained silent.

That a duel had taken place, both she and her mother had guessed. What did she infer from this? What did she think? What did she feel? She never could tell later on. Her soul was dark,



her heart was cold. Her whole being was benumbed with boundless terror.

By long, urgent and skilful persuasion, the general succeeded in inducing the baroness to leave the room and to lie down for a while, "so as to save herself for the patient."

Hardly had the door closed behind her, when the servant entered softly and announced Count Truyn.

At the sound of his name Zinka turned her head. The general went to the door to receive him. "May I bring him in?" he asked. Zinka nodded.

Having been informed of the tragedy by Siegburg, Truyn had immediately hastened to the Palazetto, although it was eleven o'clock.

He went toward Zinka in silence. The simple warmth with which, without uttering a word, he took both her hands in his, the deep pity, the heartfelt grief at not being able to help, which shone from his eyes, warmed her; the numbness which held her whole being enchained gave way. Tears rushed from her eyes; a low, broken wail came from her lips; and, restraining her sobs with difficulty, she murmured, hardly intelligibly: "There is no hope—no hope at all!"

His mother's loud lamentations had not disturbed the dying man; the first half-suppressed tone of sorrow which Zinka uttered waked him. His limbs began to twitch restlessly; then he slowly opened his large eyes, the whites of which had a dark lustre like polished silver, and fixed them



upon his sister. From her his glance slowly and wearily turned to a bloody cloth which had been forgotten, then upon the general. Slowly and with difficulty he seemed to comprehend the situation. He struggled for breath, made impatient motions with his hands and shoulders; finally, his whole body was strongly convulsed. Consciousness had returned to him; he drew a deep breath.

The first thing that he remembered were his official duties.

"Have you informed the ambassador?" he asked the general almost with vehemence.

"No, not yet."

"Hurry, then, I beg of you; they must telegraph to Vienna."

"Very well," replied the general in a soothing tone, "I will attend to it. Will you have the goodness to wait here till I return?" he inquired of Truyn; then he hastened away.

For a moment silence reigned; then Stertzl began in a low voice:

"Do you know how it all came about, Count Truyn?"

Truyn bowed his head.

"And you, Zini?" asked Stertzl, sadly fixing his eyes on the girl's pale face.

"I know that you are suffering," she replied; "that is enough for me."

"Oh, Zini——"

Stertzl struggled for breath, stretched out his hand to Zinka, and said hoarsely and indistinctly:



"Zini—butterfly—it was all my fault—I have spoilt everything for you—I alone——"

She wanted to stop him. "Don't excite yourself," she whispered, bending over him affectionately; "leave all that till you are better. I know very well that you love me, and that you would have got me the stars from the sky if you could only have reached them."

A torturing restlessness came over him.

"No, Zini, no; you could have had the stars," he gasped in a sort of muffled, breathless staccato; "the loveliest stars—Sempaly was not in fault—I alone—the prince had been informed—but—I was exasperated—I forgot myself—and then all was over! A drop of water, Zini, please——"

She gave him water; he drank greedily. He repulsed the hand with which she tried gently to close his lips, and continued impetuously, though with a very weak voice: "I must tell you—else my heart will burst. Yonder is my writing-desk, count—in the little drawer on the left—you'll find a letter to Zinka—pray give it to her!"

Truyn did as he wished. The letter was sealed and addressed to Zinka in Stertzl's fine, regular handwriting. She opened it; it contained the lines which Sempaly had written before going to Frascati. For the case that they should reach Zinka's hands only after his death, Stertzl had added a few explanatory words. She read. The dying man anxiously watched the expression of her face. That expression did not change in the least. Sem-



paly's words passed over her heart without touching it. After she had finished the letter she remained silent. Two red spots burned upon her white cheeks.

"I received the letter—too late," said Stertzl disconsolately; "the general—will tell you—how it all happened—I did not know—what I was about—but—I spared him. Therefore forgive me—and act—as if I—had never existed. I can only—rest quietly—in my grave—if I know—that you—are happy!"

She still remained silent; her large eyes had grown very dark, but it was not grief for lost happiness which glowed within them.

Suddenly she tore the letter into pieces, and let them fall upon the floor. "And if he had written ten letters," she cried, "that would make no difference now. Do not trouble yourself about it, Cecil; it is all over. If nothing stood between us I could not be his wife. I no longer love him. He seems to me so small beside you!"



## CHAPTER XIV.

THE account was closed between the brother and sister, the discord resolved. For more than twenty-four hours longer Cecil struggled with life. Zinka did not leave his bedside. The consciousness of their mutual, unrestrained affection seemed to mingle a kind of soothing melancholy with the deep sorrow of the two. The physical pain which he suffered was terrible, particularly during the first night and the forenoon following upon it. Nevertheless, he bore his tortures with the greatest fortitude, and only the slight twitching of his hands and the involuntary distortion of his features betrayed his sufferings. He was conscious most of the time.

He rejected the palliating opiates prescribed by Dr. E——; he wished to “keep his head clear” as long as possible.

When Zinka, approaching the subject with the tenderest consideration, begged him to receive the Last Sacrament, he granted her wish. “If it will be a comfort to you, butterfly,” he said hardly above his breath, and received the priest with due reverence and perfect composure.

In the afternoon he felt rather more easy. Zinka began to hope. “You feel better,” she whispered



beseechingly again and again; "you feel better, do you not?"

"I have much less pain," he answered.

Then she began to make plans for the future; he smiled sadly.

It was impossible to meet death with more dignity—and it was so hard for him to die!

The sympathy awakened by the great misfortune which had befallen him was universal. Like wild-fire the terrible intelligence spread abroad. A sort of panic seized upon society. There was no one on that day who had ever uttered a frivolous word about Stertzl or his sister who did not regret it bitterly. Every one came or sent to the Palazetto to obtain the latest news.

From time to time the baroness would triumphantly bring to her son's bedside the turned-down card of some person of high rank, and report: "N—— or B—— called in person to inquire about you."

Later on, the patient fell into a restless, feverish slumber. Zinka and the general did not stir from his room. The windows were open, but the air which came in from outside through the lowered Venetian blinds was sultry and oppressive. Straw was spread along the pavement in front of the Palazetto; the muffled sound of wheels reached the sick-room from the Corso.

Twilight was falling; the rolling of the carriages had ceased.

Suddenly the silence of the evening was broken



by the sound of the irregular, slow steps of a great number of people, accompanied by a mournful, solemn melody. Zinka started up to close the window. Too late! The sleeper had already opened his eyes. He listened. "A funeral!" he murmured.

From that time he grew restless. His sufferings began anew. He plucked at the counterpane, tossed his head about on his pillow incessantly, spoke of his will, asked the general to note down some slight changes which he wished to have made in it, and when Zinka besought him: "Do not trouble yourself about that now; leave it till later," he shook his head, and then murmured in a half-extinct voice, which trembled with pain: "I must make haste—I have no time to spare—no time to spare!"

But as Zinka, unable to control herself, was about to hasten from the room to hide her tears, he held her back. "Stay, darling—stay, Zini," he said; "cry, if it relieves your heart; cry as much as you like. Poor little butterfly—you'll miss me a little after all!"

Once only he broke down entirely. He had asked that a messenger might be sent to the Palazzo Venezia for an English paper in which he was particularly interested on account of a political question pending at the time.

His excellency the ambassador brought the paper himself, and approached the bedside deeply moved.



"How are you—how are you? You were right, Stertzl; Ignatiew has really—most remarkable—you have the gift of divination—I shall miss you very much when you are in Constantinople——" He could not go on. A painful pause ensued.

"I'm going somewhat farther than Constantinople," murmured Stertzl at last; "I wonder who will take my place——" His voice failed him, and, with a moan, he hid his face in the pillow.

Toward midnight the death-struggle commenced. Dr. E—— had told the general that it would probably be terrible. They tried in vain to induce Zinka to leave the room. All night long she knelt by the bedside, in her tumbled white dress, and prayed.

At five in the morning the death-rattle ceased. It seemed as if all was over, but suddenly the dying man began to utter single disconnected words. A strange, expressive look, which seemed to penetrate into the far distance, and which is seen only in dying persons, shone from his eyes. "Do not cry, child," he breathed hardly audibly, "all will come right yet." Then, with an effort, he made a groping movement with his hand, as if he were trying to find something—seemed to be following a thought which he could no longer grasp. His eyes fixed themselves for the last time upon his sister. "Go to bed, Zini," he whispered; "I feel better—I'm sleepy—Constantino——"

He turned his head to the wall and drew a deep, placid breath.

All was over; he had begun his journey! The



general closed the eyes of the dead and led Zinka from the room. Outside, in the arched passage, stood a bent figure. It was Sempaly. Tortured by remorse and anxiety, he had crept into the Palazetto. He stood there, pale, haggard, with trembling hands and fixed eyes.

She did not shrink from him; she passed by him; she did not see him.

. . . . .

The glorious morning-light of the South lay warm and golden upon the court surrounded by arcades. In one corner, filled with black shadows, a host of light-blue butterflies were gambolling, like a piece of sky torn in a thousand pieces.

It was the corner where stood the wounded Amazon!



## CHAPTER XV.

THANKS to Siegburg's indiscretions, which, as usual, displayed a great deal of tact, all Rome soon knew that Prince Sempaly, on the evening before the duel, had given his consent to his brother's marriage with Fräulein Stertzl. It was also informed of Stertzl's outbreak of temper, and of his heavy expiation, so disproportioned to his fault. The firm, never-wavering friendship which Princess Vulpini, noble woman that she was, exhibited for Zinka in those days, intimidated all evil tongues, and saved her reputation.

A strong reaction in favor of the Stertzls took place in the opinion of society. It was suddenly considered improper, narrow-minded, even *mauvais genre*, to cast a slur on Zinka; she and Cecil were now "*des gens tout à fait exceptionnels*."

The deceased had expressed a desire to be buried in his native soil. The body was embalmed and lay in state in a large empty hall, in which the baroness had once intended to give a ball. The walls, the floor, the catafalque were covered with flowers. It was a true Roman "*infiorata*." The windows were darkened; hundreds of huge wax candles, with their mild, reddish flames, sent their flickering light through the lofty hall.



Countess Ilsenbergh and the Iatinskys were present at the funeral services. The catafalque was surrounded by a crowd of persons of high rank, clad in solemn black. No "*jour*" of the baroness had ever seen so brilliant an assembly. Her affected mien plainly showed that this circumstance gave her a degree of satisfaction which, at such a moment, was simply horrible. There she stood, beside the coffin, wrapped in long trailing crape-trimmed draperies, a handkerchief with a broad black border in her hand, two miserable tears on her cheeks, and—received.

People pressed her hand and said a few words of superficial sympathy, and she murmured: "How comforting!"

And when they had disposed of the mother, they looked about for the sister. They would really have liked to prove to her, or at least show her, how sincerely they sympathized with her in her great sorrow. But they could not find her, and when finally one of the ladies exclaimed in a low, half-startled tone: "There she is!" they all looked at the dark corner where Princess Vulpini, with a tenderness like that of a mother, was bending over a trembling, deathly-pale young creature, quite beside herself with grief; but none of them had the courage to approach her. Only Countess Nini, who looked almost as wretched as Zinka herself, went to her, took her in her arms, and kissed her.

The next morning masses were read in St. Marco's Chapel in the Palazzo Venezia. A vocal



quartet sang the same sweet, melting allegretto from Beethoven's Seventh Symphony which had been played only three months before in connection with the Lady Jane Grey tableau.

A week later the Stertzls left Rome. Up to the last hour, the baroness received visits of condolence. Again and again she repeated her monotonous formula of grief: "A career so brilliantly begun!

Zinka never appeared in the drawing-room, and only a few ventured to look her up in her little boudoir. Worn to a shadow, with eyes swollen and dimmed with weeping, and sharpened features, she presented a truly heart-rending appearance, and seemed, after the first violence of her grief had diminished, only to grow more and more disconsolate.

This is the case with all deeper natures.

In its first stages, sorrow for the death of one we love is always mingled with a kind of rebellion against our fate—a delirium in which we finally forget everything, even the cause of our grief. But when our eyes have become dry and our heart is weary with beating, when we have said for the first time, "I must submit," then we recognize the great void which death has caused in our life; we feel how empty, still, and cold it has grown around us.

Day by day Zinka realized more fully what she had lost. It seemed as if she were continually groping about for the strong arm which had sup-



ported her so tenderly. The general and Princess Vulpini vied in doing all in their power to help her over this terrible time. The one whose presence was most consoling to her was Truyn; and several times, after seven o'clock, when she could be sure of not meeting anybody, she stole out to the Hotel de l'Europe to Gabrielle, and it was touching to see how tenderly the little girl sympathized with the sorrow of her older friend, and what loving pity she bestowed upon her.

On the morning of the Stertzls' departure, Truyn and the general came to the station to see them off. Truyn entered the compartment to raise a window which the maid could not open. When he had finished, Zinka laid both her hands in his. "May God reward you for your kindness!" she said, and raised her face to be kissed. He hesitated a moment, then made the sign of the cross on her forehead, and gently touched her golden hair with his lips.

"*Au revoir!*" he murmured brokenly, bowed to the baroness, and left the compartment.

When he reached the platform, he was very red and his eyes glistened. With bared head he looked after the departing train, from which a little face was bowing a farewell greeting.

"If a man, at least, had the right to care for her!" he murmured.



## CHAPTER XVI.

AND now only a few words more in conclusion.

Baroness Sterztl was one of the few persons who have no redeeming point whatever. At the Moravian estate to which she withdrew after her son's death, she found her life extremely dull, and treated Zinka with the most unkind severity. Totally soured and embittered, she was constantly whimpering, and, by her gloomy face and her incessant complaints, made every one unhappy who came near her. At the end of her first year of mourning, a craving for excitement awoke within her. She made excursions to various baths, as well as to Vienna, where she assembled the remnants of her old circle around her, and endeavored to astonish all her former acquaintances by the relation of her splendid Roman reminiscences. At the same time she still wore crape on her dresses, and made use of black-edged letter-paper. She never ceased to speak of herself as a broken-hearted mother, and tried to surround herself, as it were, with the nimbus of a Niobe; at bottom, however, her ostentatious grief was nothing but a last pedestal for her vanity.

The caustic artist-general declared that, in reality, she was proud of her son having been killed by "a Sempaly."



She died, about three years after the catastrophe, of a catarrh of the lungs, which took a fatal turn only because, although she already felt its symptoms, she insisted upon attending, with a friend from the "*Sacré Cœur*," on a very cold day, the washing of the pilgrims' feet in the imperial palace.

Zinka mourned for her mother more deeply than would ever have been expected.

She passed both summer and winter, year after year, at Alinkau, where Gabrielle Truyn, with her governess, frequently made her a visit of some weeks. Truyn came rarely, and never remained longer than a few hours. But only those who knew how closely he was attached to his daughter could realize the sacrifice which he made for Zinka in parting with his "little comrade" so often for her sake.

With Princess Vulpini Zinka carried on the most affectionate correspondence. Her sorrow faded only very, very slowly; but, like all truly noble natures, she appeared wondrously refined by it. She devoted her whole existence to the most self-sacrificing benevolence; the only pleasure which for years harmonized with her morbid state of mind, was the alleviation of the suffering of others.

. . . . .

Soon after the death of the baroness, General Von Klinger left Europe; he returned only last spring, disembarked at Havre de Grace, and went to Paris, where he stopped for a few days to study the *Salon*, intending to go home from there.



Thanks to the courtesy of a well-known artist, he was permitted to visit the exhibition on the so-called "varnishing-day"—the day before the actual opening.

Among the many "*femmes du monde*," who, under the ægis of their drawing-master or of the "*artiste de la maison*," had stolen an entrance without being in the least entitled to it, in order to enjoy the first-fruits of the *Salon*, the general remarked a young lady of uncommon beauty, who, with her head high in the air, was passing from one picture to another with an exceedingly light and at the same time energetic step, and criticising the masterpieces surrounding her with the implacable severity and self-sufficiency of a fanatical novice in art.

There was something so refined in her charming exterior, something so droll in her naïve arrogance, so much of childlike confidence in the manner in which she conversed with the old gentleman—one of the most noted of the Paris artists, who seemed to be acting as her guide through this labyrinth—that our military friend could not refrain from watching her with much pleasure.

Suddenly she observed him, looked at him keenly, and approached him with the most charming frankness. "Why, general! Have you got back at last? How glad papa will be! You have not changed in the least."

"But you have changed all the more, Countess Gabrielle," he replied.



"Well, of course. When was it that we met last—four years ago, at Zini's, wasn't it? Why, I was a child at that time," she chatted gayly, "but now I am grown up; and what is more—only think, general!—I have a picture here, a tiny water-color" (at this she blushed a little, which made her look very much like her father); "you'll take a look at it, won't you?"

"Of course," he assured her, and then his eye fell upon her dress. "It seems to me that you are in mourning," he remarked.

"Yes, for poor mamma; it is almost a year since she died." A momentary gravity clouded her features. "Ah, there is papa!" she then cried, suddenly growing lively again; "we are always losing each other here in the *Salon*; our tastes are totally different, you know—papa is entirely *vieux jeu* yet."

Truyn greeted the general with great warmth. Gabrielle's glance meanwhile flashed archly from him to the old gentleman. The most roguish dimples appeared in her cheeks. At last she came close to her father and whispered something in his ear.

At first he hesitated; then he said, not without a slight tinge of embarrassment: "We are about to drive to the Hotel Bristol, where we are to lunch with my sister. She would be delighted, I am sure, if you would join us."

The general at first said something about indiscretion, etc., but allowed himself to be persuaded, and drove with the two through the Champs



Elysées, fragrant with myriads of blossoms glittering from a recent rain, to the Place Vendôme.

"Auntie," cried Gabrielle merrily, as she entered the drawing-room, "guess whom we have brought you!"

"Ah!" cried the princess joyfully, "you have come just in the nick of time, general!"

Suddenly his glance turned from her; there, somewhat behind her, stood Zinka!

The stamp of a great sorrow was impressed indelibly upon her features; yet her eyes showed a gleam of deep, quiet happiness which could well be reconciled to the memory of past grief. The lovely May of her life's spring had passed away; but there was such an unspeakable charm about her whole appearance that even the freshness of Gabrielle's eighteen years could not detract from it.

Truyn approached her; an awkward silence followed. Suddenly Gabrielle began to laugh.

"Don't you suspect something, general?" she cried.

"It is not announced yet," stammered Truyn, "but you take such a warm interest in us all——" He took Zinka's hand.

The general's face was radiant with pleasure. He put his arm around Zinka and gave Truyn his hand in congratulation.

Zinka, however, began to weep bitterly. "O uncle," she whispered, "if only Cecil could have lived to see this!"

. . . . .



And Sempaly?

After the terrible catastrophe he vanished from the scene, travelled in the East, and then re-appeared in the service. To a Sempaly all things are possible!

At this day he has the name of being one of the ablest of diplomats.

A strange transformation has taken place in him. The agreeable trifler, the careless *attaché*, has become an exemplary official. His exterior, too, is changed. He is more distinguished in his appearance than ever, but his features have grown sharper. He is irritable, supercilious, and regardless of others, and never hesitates to say the cutting words that are upon his tongue—to women as well as to men. Nevertheless, and more than ever, he exerts an almost boundless fascination over all who come in contact with him.

Not long ago, as the general was waiting at a Hungarian frontier station for the connection with the Vienna train, he was struck by the fine voice of a traveller in an otter-skin coat, with travelling-cap drawn down over his forehead, who was giving his servant a brief, concise order. The old gentleman looked up; his eyes met those of the stranger; it was Sempaly on his way from the East to Vienna. They fell into conversation, exchanging trivial phrases without quite warming to each other.

Suddenly, Sempaly began, in his brusque manner, which has now become proverbial everywhere: "You were in Paris, were you not? A witness at



the wedding? What do you think of Truyn's marriage?"

"I am delighted with it," replied the general.

"Well, yes, everybody seems happy. Marie Vulpini is enchanted, and Gabrielle proposed for her father, so they wrote me! "*Enfin, tout est pour le mieux dans le meilleur des mondes possibles*," he continued in his sharp, quick manner—"and Zinka—how is she looking? The papers spoke of her as very beautiful."

"She is still very charming," said the old gentleman with the careless garrulity of age. "However, joy has always a transfiguring power; she regrets only one thing—that Cecil could not have lived to see it all."

At that moment he remembered the egregious blunder of which he had been guilty, and, in order to change the conversation to neutral ground, he hastily began to speak of Sempaly's unusually rapid career, and expressed the opinion that it must make him very happy to have found so appropriate a sphere of action for his brilliant faculties.

Sempaly gave him a keen look, and smiled with a peculiar expression.

"It is very strange, general," he said, shrugging his shoulders, "youth demands happiness of Fate as a right; in riper years we beg for peace as a charity. We obtain more easily that which we demand, than that for which we beg, but we cannot keep it."

FINIS.



# WORTHINGTON COMPANY'S CATALOGUE

of Standard Books that every one ought to have; they are all handsome and attractive, and will be a valuable addition to any one's library.

---

## NEW EDITION, NEW PLATES.

**ALICE ADVENTURES IN WONDERLAND.**—12mo. \$1.25.

Above are the most charming fairy tales of the 19th Century. Exquisitely amusing, deliciously illustrated. Nursery classics translated into most of the languages of Europe.

**AYTOUN.**—Lays of the Scottish Cavaliers. By Wm. E. Aytoun, late Prof. of Literature and Belles-Lettres in Univ. of Edinburgh, and Editor of *Blackwood's Magazine*. 16mo, extra cloth, \$1.00.

**BAILEY, PHILIP JAMES.**—*Festus*: A Poem. (New Aldine Edition.) 16mo, vellum cloth, \$1.00; do., do., three-quarter calf, extra, \$2.50; do., do., flexible, or tree-calf, \$3.50.

This great dramatic poem exhibits a soul gifted, tried, buffeted, beguiled, stricken, purified, redeemed, pardoned, and triumphant. It is interspersed with delightful songs. Has been praised by Bulwer, Thackeray and Tennyson as a remarkable poem of great beauty. The present edition is very handsome, the type is large and elegant, the paper is excellent, and the steel engravings are of exceeding grace.

**BON GAULTIER'S BOOK OF BALLADS.**—By W. E. Aytoun and Theodore Martin. A new edition, including "Firmilian." Cloth, \$1.00.

In all his poems Prof. Aytoun has put forth a sustained power and beauty of expression which have placed him in the foremost rank of the poets of his time. "His Lays" have all the historic truth and force of Macaulay, expressing noble thought by a delineation of generous and lofty natures stated with fluency, vigour and movement. His ballad themes are selected from striking incidents and from stirring scenes of Scottish history, and he has thrown over them the light of an imagination at once picturesque and powerful.



**BURTON** (Dr. J. Hill).—The Book Hunter, with Memoir and Index. NEW EDITION, with Portrait and Engraving of Interior of Library. Crown 8vo, Roxburgh style, \$3.00.

Burton's "Book Hunter" is indispensable to every owner of a library; it will be found of incalculable aid in classifying, studying, collecting and the preservation of books. It abounds in reminiscences of noted Bibliophiles and Book Hunters. We offer in this edition a volume that for general excellence of typography and binding will delight the heart of every book hunter.

**CAMPBELL** (Sir George, M.P.).—White and Black. The Outcome of a Visit to the United States. By Sir George Campbell, M.P. Being a Bird's-eye View of the Management of the Colored Races, with the Contents of my Journal. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, \$1.75.

We have in this work the views of a prominent Englishman on the relative positions occupied by the Black and White Races in the United States. Several suggestions and opinions are given toward solving the Race Problem that will be read with lively interest by all who desire the caste question amicably settled.

**CARROLL** (Lewis).—Through the Looking Glass, and What Alice Found There. With fifty illustrations by John Tenniel. 1 vol. 12mo. \$1.25.

**CHILD'S OWN BOOK OF FAIRY TALES.**  
—Containing Aladdin or the Wonderful Lamp, Beauty and the Beast, Children in the Wood, Goody Two-Shoes, Gulliver, Jack the Giant Killer, Jack and the Beanstalk, Puss in Boots, Robin Hood, Tom Thumb, White Cat, Yellow Dwarf, and others. With upwards of one hundred illustrations, after designs by eminent American artists. Square 16mo, cloth. \$1.50.

The best collection of the famous old-fashioned Fairy Tales contained in any one volume, many of which can only be found in this edition.

**CHILD'S TREASURY OF FAIRY TALES.**  
For Little Folks. Containing The Six Swans, Little Hunch - Back, Hop - O - My Thumb, Blanch and Rosalind, Dumpling and the Toad



Fortunio, The Fox's Brush, The Three Wishes, Cinderella, Whittington and his Cat, and many others. Printed with extra large type. Illustrated with 60 engravings by the American artists, Twaites and others. Cloth, black and gold, square 16mo, \$1.50.

This edition of the more popular and best known Fairy Tales is especially commended for the profusion and beauty of its illustrations.

**CHILDREN'S BIBLE PICTURE AND STORY BOOK.**—With sixty full-page illustrations. Square 16mo, beautifully printed and bound in cloth extra, \$1.50.

A real beautiful book—one that ought to be placed into the hands of all, even the youngest children. It is a complete history of the principal events or stories in the Old and New Testaments, written in remarkably clear, simple, unaffected language, extremely well illustrated. It brings out into bold relief the singular charm of the book of books, and leads on to the study of the scriptures.

**CRAIG'S DICTIONARY.**—A Pronouncing Dictionary of the English Language. Based upon the Works of Webster, Worcester, etc., etc. Containing 30,000 Words and 750 Engravings. Edited by C. H. Craig, LL.D. 12mo, cloth, \$1.00.

"Every one ought to own a dictionary,"—and the low price at which we offer this edition places it within the reach of all. It is, undoubtedly, the best cheap dictionary made; it contains all the words in general every-day use, with their most standard definitions and pronunciations.

**CRAIG (A.R., M.A.). YOUR LUCK'S IN YOUR HAND;** or, The Science of Modern Palmistry, with some Account of the Gypsies. Numerous illustrations. 12mo, cloth, gilt extra, \$1.25.

A recent revival of interest in this fascinating study has certainly proven the fact that Prof. Craig's Palmistry is the most complete and satisfactory work on the subject extant—it shows the careful work of a master hand. Should there be a single "doubting Thomas" who does not believe "your luck's in your hand," let him read the convincing arguments in this work and be converted.

**CYCLOPÆDIA OF BIBLE ILLUSTRATIONS,** being a storehouse of Similes, Allegories, and Anecdotes. Edited by Rev. R. Newton, D.D. 12mo, cloth, \$1.25.

A treasury of spiritual riches borrowed from nature, art, history, biography, anecdote, and simile, by Christian authors of all countries and ages. A book full of wisdom and of the happiest illustrations of points of doctrine and morals.



**CYCLOPÆDIA OF THE ARTS AND SCIENCES:** Botany, Zoology, Mineralogy, Geology, Astronomy, Geometry, Mathematics, Mechanics, Electricity, Chemistry, etc., etc. Illustrated with over 3,000 wood engravings. 1 vol., 4to, cloth extra, \$6.00; sheep, \$7.50; or, in half morocco extra, \$10.00.

This popular Encyclopædia is more than a first-class book of reference, it is a library of popular scientific treatises each one complete in itself, which places into the hands of the reader the means to procure for himself a thorough technical self-education. The several topics are handled with a view of a thorough instruction of these particular branches of knowledge, and all statements are precise and scientifically accurate.

**DANA (R. H., Jr.).** Two Years Before the Mast. 1 vol., 12mo, \$1.50.

One of the most fascinating and instructive narratives of the sea ever written for young folks. The reader's sympathies are enlisted with the hero from first to last, but the hardships and hairbreadth escapes he meets with would prevent most boys from emulating his example.

**DUFFERIN.**—Letters from High Latitudes. A Yacht Voyage to Iceland, Jan Mayen, and Spitzbergen. By his Excellency the Earl of Dufferin, Governor-General of the Dominion of Canada. Authorized edition. With portrait and several illustrations. 8vo, cloth extra, \$1.50.

The titled author has given us in this work a narrative of a voyage replete with incident in the yacht "Foam." His impressions of the countries and people visited in the far North are written in a fresh and original style, in the purest English, and the account of the whole voyage is as pleasing and interesting as a work of fiction.

**ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING'S POEMS.**—The most satisfactory American edition issued, printed from excellent type on paper of superior quality, with introductory essay by Henry T. Tuckerman. 3 vols., 8vo, gilt tops, \$5.25; half calf extra, \$10.50.

The highest place among modern poetesses must be claimed for Mrs. Browning. In purity, loftiness of sentiment, feeling and in intellectual power she is excelled only by Tennyson, whose works it is evident she had carefully studied. Nearly all her poems bear the impress of deep and sometimes melancholy thought, but show a high and fervid imagination. Her *Sonnets from the Portuguese*, are as passionate as Shakespeare's, all eminently beautiful. Of her *Aurora Leigh*, Ruskin said "that is the greatest poem which this century has produced in any language."



**FESTUS.**—A Poem by Philip James Bailey. With choice steel plates, by Hammett Billings. Beautifully printed. 4to, cloth, gilt, \$3.00; do., do., full gilt and gilt edges, \$5.00.

**GAUTIER** (Theophile). One of Cleopatra's Nights and Other Fantastic Stories. Translated from the French by Lafcadio Hearn. 8vo, cloth extra, gilt top, \$1.75.

A brilliant and intensely fascinating collection of stories from the pen of the inimitable Gautier, they are excellent specimens of his work in his brightest and happiest vein; the scenes are audaciously limned, and distinguished for their conscientious fidelity to nature.

**GRAY.**—The works of Thomas Gray, *in Prose and Verse*. Edited by Edmund Gosse, Lecturer of English Literature at the University of Cambridge. With portraits, fac-similes, etc. 4 vols., crown 8vo, cloth, gilt top, \$6.00; half calf, \$12.00.

"Every lover of English literature will welcome the works of Gray, the author of the immortal 'Elegy written in a Country Churchyard,' from the hands of an editor so accomplished as Mr. Gosse. His competency for the task has been known for some time to students of poetry, and the present edition is now considered to be the most careful and complete ever published."—*London Athenæum*.

**GUNNING** (William D.).—Life History of Our Planet. Illustrated with 80 illustrations by Mary Gunning. Crown 8vo, cloth, gilt extra, \$1.50.

From this work, more so than any other, we probably gain a clearer idea of the almost incredible changes Nature has wrought on our planet and still more wonderful changes we may expect in the future. We are given several interesting pages—with illustrations—on the mammoth creatures of pre-historic times, whose mummified bones alone remain to tell their story. It should be read by every one who desires to know more about the world we live in.

**HARDY** (Lady Duffus). Through Cities and Prairie Lands. A most interesting book of Travels in America. 1 vol., crown 8vo, cloth, gilt top, \$1.75.

Recollections of a most pleasant trip made by this distinguished lady through America. She has many warm words for the kind manner in which she was treated, and altogether the work is a most pleasing and pronounced contrast to the average hastily written English impressions of America.



**HISTORY AND ANTIQUITIES OF FREE-MASONRY**, as Connected with Ancient Norse Guilds, and the Oriental and Mediæval Building Fraternities, to which is added the Legend of Prince Edward, etc., by George F. Fort. A New Edition. 1 vol., 8vo, \$1.75.

This work is the result of years of labor on the part of the author, whose original and persistent design has been to arrive at the *truth*, and, at the same time, supply a want long felt by members of the Masonic Fraternity, as well as the uninitiated. That he has fully accomplished his purpose is demonstrated by the fact that it is now looked upon as the most standard and authentic history of Freemasonry in existence.

**HOW?** or, Spare Hours Made Profitable for Boys and Girls. By Kennedy Holbrook. Profusely illustrated by the author. 8vo, cloth, gilt, \$2.00. do., do., full gilt extra, \$2.50.

The most interesting and instructive work of the kind ever issued. By the help of their plainly worded and fully illustrated instructions, any bright boy or girl may devise unlimited entertainment and fashion many acceptable and useful presents for playmates and friends. The directions are for working with wood, paper, chemicals and paints, with knife, pencil, brush and scissors, and for the performance of sleight-of-hand tricks.

**JERROLD** (Blanchard). Days with Great Authors. Dickens, Scott, Thackeray, Douglas Jerrold. Selections from their Works, and Biographical Sketches and Personal Reminiscences. Numerous illustrations. 8vo, cloth, gilt extra, \$2.00.

To the hosts of admirers of these great authors this work will prove of absorbing interest, as it contains many reminiscences never before in print. Considerable space has also been devoted to their public speeches, and short, characteristic selections are given from their best works.

**LA FONTAINE'S FABLES**.—Translated from the French by Elizur Wright, Jr. Illustrations by Grandville. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, \$1.50.

*La Fontaine's Fables*—there is magic as well as music in the name; they have been deservedly popular for years, and they will be read with ever increasing pleasure by young and old, "as long as the world rolls round." This is the only moderate priced translation of these charming fables published.

**LE BRUN** (Madame Vigée).—Souvenirs of. With a steel portrait, from an original painting by the author. 2 vols. in 1, crown 8vo, red cloth, gilt top, \$1.75.

"An amusing book, which contains a great deal that is new and strange, and many anecdotes which are always entertaining." It is written in a reminiscent and chatty style, and relates many "choice tid-bits" of the distinguished historical personages with whom the authoress was acquainted.



## **LOUDON'S COTTAGE, FARM AND VILLA**

Architecture and Furniture.—Containing numerous Designs for Dwellings, from the Villa to the Cottage and the Farm, each design accompanied by analytical and critical remarks. Illustrated by upwards of 2,000 engravings. In one very thick vol., 8vo, \$7.50.

One of the most useful books on architecture ever issued. Gives valuable hints to anyone contemplating building either villas, cottages, or outhouses, and may save thoughtful and practical men hundreds of dollars.

**MACAULAY'S LAYS** of Ancient Rome.—With all the antique illustrations and steel portrait. Beautifully printed. 4to, cloth, extra gilt, \$3.50; do., do., full gilt and gilt edges, \$5.00; do., do., 12mo, cloth extra, \$1.00.

When the famous historian issued these lays, which have since become classics, it was a literary surprise, for no one thought that he was also a poet of such high degree. His poetry is the rythmical outflow of a vigorous and affluent writer, given to splendor of diction and imagery in his flowing prose. Stedman said of this volume, "the lays have to me a charm, and to almost every healthy young mind are an immediate delight."

**NAPOLEON.**—Las Cases' Napoleon. Memoirs of the Life, Exile, and Conversations of the Emperor Napoleon. By the Count de Las Cases, with 8 steel portraits, maps, and illustrations. 4 vols., 12mo, 400 pages each, cloth, \$5.00; half calf extra, \$10.00.

With his son the Count devoted himself at St. Helena to the care of the Emperor and passed his evenings in recording his remarks. Commenting in a letter to Lucian Bonaparte on the treatment to which Napoleon was subjected, he was arrested by the English authorities and sent away and imprisoned.

**NAPOLEON.**—O'Meara's Napoleon in Exile; or A Voice from St. Helena. Opinions and Reflections of Napoleon on the Most Important Events in his Life and Government in his own words. By Barry E. O'Meara, his late Surgeon. Portrait of Napoleon, after Delaroche, and a view of St. Helena, both on steel. 2 vols., 12mo, cloth, \$2.50; half calf extra, \$5.00.

Mr. O'Meara's works contains a body of the most interesting and valuable information—~~information~~ the accuracy of which stands unimpeached by any ~~attacks~~ made against its author. The details in Las Cases' work and those of Mr. O'Meara mutually support each other.



**NAPIER'S PENINSULA WAR.**—The History of the War in the Peninsula. By Major-Gen. Sir W. F. P. Napier. With 55 maps and plans of battles, 5 portraits on steel, and a complete index. An elegant Library Edition. 5 vols., 8vo, \$7.50; half calf, \$18.00.

Acknowledged to be the most valuable record of that war which England waged against the power of Napoleon. The most ample testimony has been borne to the accuracy of the historian's statements, and to the diligence and acuteness with which he has collected his materials.

**NELL GWYN,** The Story of, and the Sayings of Charles the Second, related and collated by Peter Cunningham, F.S.A. With fine portrait and 11 extra engravings. 8vo, cloth extra, \$3.50.

An exceedingly interesting memoir relating to the times of Charles II. Pepys in writing about Nell Gwyn called her "Pretty witty Nell," was always delighted to see her, and constantly praises her excellent acting. Cunningham states that had the King lived he would have created her Countess of Greenwich, and his dying wish to his brother, afterwards James II., was: "Do not let poor Nelly starve."

**PICTURESQUE IRELAND,** Descriptive and Historical.—Comprising 50 full-page engravings on steel of its picturesque scenery, remarkable antiquities and present aspects, from original drawings by W. H. Bartlett, and a complete account of its cities, towns, mountains, waters, ancient monuments, and modern structures by Markinfeld Addey. 2 vols., 4to, cloth extra, gilt edges, \$10.00; or in half morocco extra, gilt edges, \$20.00.

These two handsome volumes will make the reader better acquainted with the picturesque features of the "Emerald Isle" than any work that has ever preceded it. Only by a combination of both pen and pencil was it possible to give an idea of the beauty of Ireland, its marvelous lakes, mountains and valleys, romantic streams, mysterious round towers, giant's causeway, waterfalls, stately castles, magnificent religious and public edifices, etc., etc.

**PURITANS.** History of the Puritans and Pilgrim Fathers. By Professor Stowell and Daniel Wilson, F.S.A. In 1 vol., 8vo, cloth, \$1.75.

Stowell and Wilson's history is acknowledged everywhere to be the best and most exhaustive history of the Pilgrim fathers. A full and complete account of the rise of the Puritans under the Tudors to their settlement in New England, which is herein given, makes this a most valuable work of reference and study.



**STAUFFER** (Frank H.). The Queer, The Quaint, The Quizzical. A Cabinet for the Curious. With full index. 8vo, cloth extra, \$1.75.

"Oddities and wonders,  
Antiquities and blunders,  
And omens dire;  
Strange customs, cranks and freaks,  
With philosophy in streaks"

are all to be found between the covers of this book. It certainly is the completest collection of odd and curious events ever made.

**TAINÉ, H. A.**—History of English Literature. Translated by H. Van Laun, with Introductory Essay and Notes by R. H. Stoddard. 4 handsome volumes. Cloth, white labels, \$7.50.

It is *the book on the subject*, the more wonderful that, written by a French critic, it should be accepted by English-speaking people—everywhere—as *the* authority on the literature of their own language, universally prized for its clearness, terseness and comprehensiveness, and yet as interesting as a work of fiction.

**THE APOCRYPHAL NEW TESTAMENT,**  
*Being all the Gospels, Epistles, and Other Pieces now extant attributed in the First Centuries to Jesus Christ, His Apostles and their Companions, and not included in the New Testament by its compilers. Translated from the original tongues, and now first collected into one volume. With numerous quaint illustrations. 1 vol., 8vo, cloth, red edges, \$1.25.*

As a literary curiosity this work has excited the greatest attention all over the Christian world. There is nothing in it contradictory of those truths which have been accepted as *revealed*, but every chapter and verse goes to confirm the undoubted writings of the apostles and evangelists.

**WALT WHITMAN.**—Leaves of Grass. Original edition. Year 85 of the State. Foolscap 8vo, cloth extra, \$3.75.

We offer here the Fine Original Edition of Whitman's Poems. Recognition of the wonderful power and charm in his rugged verse has been freely given by all who appreciate the grand and beautiful in poetry. The "Good, Gray Poet" is gaining admirers daily; his *Leaves of Grass* is destined to live forever as a representative classic of a bold and rhythmic style of versification peculiarly his own.



**WATERS (Robert).** William Shakespeare Portrayed by Himself. A Revelation of the Poet in the Career and Character of one of his own Dramatic Heroes. By Robert Waters. 1 vol., \$1.25.

In this able and exceedingly interesting book on Shakespeare, the author shows how the great poet has revealed himself, his life, and his character, besides refuting conclusively the ciphers of Donnelly and other Baconian theories. Altogether the best life of Shakespeare, remarkably well written in vigorous English. "An original, wholesome, scholarly, and plainly sincere book on Shakespeare. It is after all something new about Shakespeare, which Lowell feared could not be said."—E. C. STEDMAN.

**WILSON'S NOCTES AMBROSIANÆ.**—The Noctes Ambrosianæ, by Prof. Wilson, J. G. Lockhart, James Hogg, and Dr. Maginn. A revised edition, with Steel Portraits, and Memoirs of the authors, and copiously annotated by R. Shelton Mackenzie, D.C.L. 6 vols., crown 8vo, including "Christopher North," A Memoir of Prof. Wilson, from family papers and other sources. By his daughter, Mrs. Gordon. Cloth \$9.00; half calf \$18.00.

This series of imaginary conversations were supposed to have taken place between Christopher North (Wilson), the Ettrick Sheperd (Hogg) and others in the parlour of a tavern kept by one Ambrose in Edinburgh, hence the title Noctes Ambrosianæ. A too literal interpretation is not to be given to the scene of these festivities, however, but the true Ambrose's must be looked for only in the realms of the imagination. It is one of the most curious and original works in the English language, a most singular and delightful outpouring of criticism, politics and descriptions of feeling, character and scenery of verse and prose, of eloquence and especially of wild fun. It breathes the very essence of the Bacchanalian revel of clever men. Prof. Wilson is a writer of the most ardent and enthusiastic genius whose eloquence is as the rush of mighty waters.

**YOUNG FOLKS' HISTORY OF THE REBELLION.** By William M. Thayer. Illustrated. 4 vols., 12mo, cloth, \$5.00.

Fort Sumter to Roanoke Island.  
Roanoke Island to Murfreesboro'.

Murfreesboro' to Fort Pillow.  
Fort Pillow to the End.

A faithful history of the late war, which by its attractive presentation is especially adapted to youthful readers. Its narrative is full of dash and adventure, the military events are recited vividly and thrillingly, it is interspersed with individual heroism, suffering and daring, and on the whole renders a better account of the war and its causes than any other book that we are acquainted with. The author's style is perfect at all times, either delicate, pathetic, or picturesque, but always in simple language that any young reader can fully understand.



## CLASSICS FOR CHILDREN.

**ÆSOP'S FABLES.** New edition, profusely illustrated. 8vo, cloth, gilt, \$2.00; do., do., full gilt extra, \$2.50.

Æsop, born in the sixth century before Christ, while traveling through Greece, recited himself his home-truths, which in the shape of fables are full of wisdom that will teach and live forever. He did not collect or write them down, but they were easily remembered, became universally popular and were passed on from mouth to mouth, and from generation to generation.

**ANDERSEN'S FAIRY TALES.**—By Hans Christian Andersen. New plates, large, clear type, handsomely printed and illustrated. 12mo, cloth, black and gold, \$2.00; do., do., full gilt, \$2.50.

The most charming fairy tales of the world, full of earnestness, humor, pathos, and fresh inventiveness, written in a style of carefully studied simplicity. They have become familiar to children in all countries.

**ARABIAN NIGHTS ENTERTAINMENTS.**  
—New edition. Edited by E. O. Chapman. Profusely illustrated. 8vo, cloth extra, \$2.00; do., do., full gilt, \$2.50.

A very pleasing edition, with most attractive illustrations of the oriental fairyland over which Queen Shehrazad reigns. It is now and always will remain a classic.

**BARON MUNCHAUSEN.**—The Life, Travels, and Extraordinary Adventures of. By the Last of his Family. 1 vol., cloth, gilt, \$2.00; do., do., full gilt extra, \$2.50.

The original Munchausen was an officer in the Russian service, who served against the Turks. He told the most extravagant stories about the campaign till his fancy completely got the better of his memory, and he believed his own extravagant fictions. The wit and humor of these tales are simply delightful.

**BOY'S OWN BOOK.**—A Complete Encyclopædia of all Athletic, Scientific, Recreative, Out-door and In-door Exercises and Diversions. Beautifully illustrated. Crown 8vo, cloth, gilt, \$1.50.

The best present anyone can make to bright boys. One ought always bear in mind the adage "all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy."



**GRIMM'S FAIRY TALES.**—Translated by Lucy Crane. Profusely illustrated by Walter Crane, Wehnert, and George Cruikshank. 8vo, cloth, gilt extra, \$2.00; do., do., full gilt, \$2.50.

The most entertaining fairy stories ever written, singularly fascinating, the delight of children, young and old.

**GULLIVER'S TRAVELS** for Children. Specially edited by E. O. Chapman, with over 200 illustrations. 1 vol., 8vo, \$2.00; do., do., full gilt, \$2.50.

The most original and extraordinary of all Swift's productions. While courtiers and politicians recognized in the adventures of Gulliver many satirical allusions to the court and politics of England, the great mass of readers saw and felt only the wonder and fascination of the narrative.

**ROBINSON CRUSOE** for Children.—Edited by E. O. Chapman, with over 170 illustrations. 1 vol., 8vo, cloth extra, \$2.00; do., do., full gilt, \$2.50.

How happy that this the most moral of romances is not only the most charming of books, but also the most instructive!—*Chalmers*. Was there ever anything written by mere man that the reader wished longer, except *Robinson Crusoe*.—*Dr. Samuel Johnson*.

---

### HENTY SERIES.

**A TALE OF WATERLOO;** or, One of the 28th. By G. A. Henty. With full-page illustrations by W. H. Overend. 12mo, cloth extra, \$1.50.

A boy's story which covers the period of the Napoleonic wars, and particularly describes the Waterloo Campaign. It is written in Mr. Henty's best style, skillfully constructed, highly enjoyable and full of exciting adventures.

**IN THE REIGN OF TERROR.**—The Adventures of a Westminster Boy. By G. A. Henty. With full-page illustrations by J. Schönberg. 12mo, cloth extra, \$1.50.

"The story is one of Mr. Henty's best."—*Saturday Review*.

"The interest of it lies in the way in which the difficulties and perils Harry has to encounter bring out the heroic and steadfast qualities of a brave nature. Again and again the last extremity seems to have been reached, but his unfailing courage triumphs over all. It is an admirable boy's book."—*Birmingham Post*.



**WITH CLIVE IN INDIA;** or, The Beginnings of an Empire. By G. A. Henty. With full-page illustrations by Gordon Browne. 12mo, cloth extra, \$1.50.

"In this book Mr. Henty has contrived to exceed himself in stirring adventures and thrilling situations."—*Saturday Review*.

"Those who know something about India will be the most ready to thank Mr. Henty for giving them this instructive volume to place in the hands of their children."—*Academy*.

---

## ROYAL PRESENTATION SERIES.

[BOXED.]

**A THOUSAND AND ONE GEMS** of English and American Poetry. By E. O. Chapman. ROYAL PRESENTATION EDITION. Beautifully illustrated. With full-page engravings. 4to, cloth, gilt edges, \$3.75.

An excellent collection of the minor poems in the English language, selected with great care and good taste. A truly representative book. The mechanical part is particularly handsome; the type is large, paper of very good quality, illustrations interesting.

**BRYANT (W. C.)—*Poems*.** Royal Presentation edition. 4to, cloth gilt extra, gilt edges, \$3.75.

A true painter of the face of this country and of the sentiment of his own people. It is his proper praise that he first, and he only, made known to mankind our northern landscape,—its summer splendor, its autumn russet, its winter lights and glooms.—*Emerson*.

**LONGFELLOW (H. W.)—*Poems*.** Select Royal Presentation edition. Finely illustrated by Gilbert and others. 4to, cloth gilt extra, \$3.75.

Longfellow's poems are marked by a most vivid imagination, great susceptibility to the impressions of natural scenery, and a ready perception of the analogies between natural objects and the human heart.

**POE (Edgar Allan)—*Poems*.** With life by Ingram. Royal Presentation edition. 1 vol., 4to, cloth, full gilt, \$3.75.

This elegant and complete edition of Poe will please the most fastidious taste of the admirers of *The Raven*, *The Bells*, and other wild and weird poems by the gifted Son of Genius.



## READ'S FEMALE POETS OF AMERICA.

—Royal Presentation edition. Beautifully illustrated and printed. 4to, cloth, gilt, gilt edges, \$3.75.

This magnificent gift book contains the representative poems of eighty American female poets, with biographical notices and many portraits. Many of the poems here collected are entirely out of print in any other form.

**TUPPER'S POETICAL WORKS**, viz.: Proverbial Philosophy, A Thousand Lines, Hactenas, etc. Royal Presentation edition, well illustrated and printed. 1 vol., 4to, cloth, gilt extra, gilt edges, \$3.75.

A beautiful copy of Tupper. His thoughts and arguments can now be preserved in the style they so justly deserve. This is the handsomest and only large edition of his works made. The illustrations are after the photogravure process and add greatly to the beauty of the work.

---

### ROYAL OCTAVO SERIES.

**DISRAELI'S WORKS (J. C.).**—Curiosities of Literature and the Literary Character Illustrated, with Curiosities of American Literature. By Rufus W. Griswold. 1 vol., 8vo, 510 pp., cloth, \$3.00; sheep, \$4.00.

Few writers instruct so amusingly and amuse so instructively as Disraeli. Cunningham said of him that "he is one of the most learned, lively and agreeable authors; that his writings have all the attractions for the general reader as the best romances." And Lord Byron called him "most entertaining and searching, whose works he had read oftener than perhaps any other English writer whatever."

**DOWNING (A. J.).** Rural Essays, Horticulture, Landscape Gardening, Rural Architecture, Fruit, etc. Edited with Memoir of the Author. With 11 illustrations. 8vo, 630 pp., cloth, \$3.00; sheep, library style, \$4.00.

A very delightful work, the standard work on the subject. Mr. Downing has practical knowledge, true taste, and loves his subject, which qualities give freshness, charm, and value to whatever he writes. This volume contains all of the author's editorial papers, originally published in the *Horticulturist*.



## MONTAIGNE'S COMPLETE WORKS.—

Comprising his Essays, Letters, and his Journey Through Germany and Italy, together with a comprehensive life by William Hazlitt. 1 vol., 8vo, cloth extra, fully illustrated with portraits, \$3.00; sheep, \$4.00.

These essays are an entertaining soliloquy on every random topic that comes into Montaigne's head, treating everything without ceremony yet with masculine sense. There have been men with deeper insight, but one would say never a man with such an abundance of thought. All in all, he is the freest and honestest of all writers.—EMERSON.

**SHAKESPEARE'S WORKS.**—New large type edition. With Life by Alexander Dyce. With numerous Steel and Wood Engravings. In one handsome vol., 8vo, cloth extra. (Upwards of 1,000 pages.) Best edition. \$3.00; sheep, \$4.00.

Of the hundreds of editions made there is none in existence which combines in such an eminent degree good typography, substantial paper, excellent illustrations, tasteful binding, and last, though not least, a correct text with intelligent notes. The volume also contains Shakespeare's Miscellaneous Poems and Sonnets, besides the valuable life by Alexander Dyce, the greatest of the Elizabethan commentators.

---

### DE LUXE EDITIONS.

## A TREASURY OF ENGLISH SONNETS.

—Edited from the original sources, with Notes, by David M. Main. Illustrated with steel portraits. 1 vol., royal 8vo, 11½ x 7½ x 2, 470 pages, \$7.50.

A new edition of this renowned and now acknowledged to be the choicest and standard selection of English sonnets. The publishers here recognize a demand for an exceptionally handsome edition equal to the English large paper copies, which readily sold for \$30.00 each. It is a superb book, printed from large type on laid paper, cloth, with leaves uncut, steel portraits. The price has been made so low as is consistent with first-class workmanship. The edition is limited to only 550 copies.

## MEMOIRS OF COUNT GRAMMONT.—By

Anthony Hamilton. Edited, with Notes, by Sir Walter Scott. Imperial 8vo. Uncut edges, bound in cloth, \$5.00; full morocco, \$10.00; *Edition limited to 500*. Do., do., 12mo, illustrated, \$2.00. Illustrated with 16 superb photogravures, including the Beauties of the Court of Charles II.

"There is nothing like the history of Grammont in any language. For drollery, knowledge of the world, various satire, general utility, united with great veracity of composition, it is unrivalled. It is pleasantry throughout, and pleasantry of the best sort, unforced, graceful and engaging."



## AIMWELL STORIES FOR BOYS (The).—

New edition. 4 vols., 12mo, illustrated, \$5.00.

CLINTON.

JERRY.

OSCAR.

WHISTLER.

We take pleasure in recommending "The Aimwell Stories," for all boys and girls who love bright, entertaining, and instructive reading. The best interests of our young friends have been considered in issuing a new edition of these delightful stories.

## AIMWELL STORIES FOR GIRLS (The).—

New edition. 3 vols., 12mo, illustrated, \$3.75.

ELLA.

JESSIE.

MARCUS.

## BROWNING, ELIZABETH BARRETT.—

Poetical Works of, and Life and Letters. New edition, with Preface and Memoir by R. H. Stoddard. Also, including Earlier Poems, not contained in any other edition. 7 vols., 12mo, cloth, \$7.00.

Admirers of "Aurora Leigh," "Lady Geraldine's Courtship," and other poems by this "most gracious singer of high poems," are here offered one of the most complete and attractive editions of her poetical works and letters ever published.

## FRIENDS IN COUNCIL.—By Sir Arthur Helps.

A Series of Readings and Discourses thereon. 4 vols., 12mo, cloth, gilt top, \$4.00.

A philosophical and instructive series of bright and interesting Discourses on Reading, Social Relations, Education, and various other live topics of the times.

The "Friends in Council" of Sir Arthur Helps evince a fine moral feeling and discriminating taste. They are written in what Ruskin has termed "beautiful and quiet English," and are celebrated for their purity of expression as well as justness of thought.

## HUME'S HISTORY OF ENGLAND.—From

the Invasion by Julius Cæsar to the Revolution in 1688. A new Issue, with the Author's last Corrections and Improvements. To which is prefixed a short Account of his Life, written by Himself. BEST LIBRARY EDITION. 6 vols., 8vo, cloth extra, gilt top, in box, \$12.00.

This superb edition of his works is made for lovers of *good books*, is printed in large type on heavy paper, and in every respect is the handsomest made. The inimitable clearness and impartiality with which Hume has summed up the arguments on both sides on the most momentous questions which have agitated England, must for ever command the admiration of mankind. In point of elegance and simplicity of style he has never been surpassed.







# Worthington's International Library.

A SERIES of contemporaneous works of fiction by great writers of America, France, Germany and Great Britain, with exquisite photogravures, printed on beautiful paper, and bound in either cloth at \$1.25, or in illuminated paper cover at 75 cents each.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. GERTRUDE'S MARRIAGE. By W. HEIMBURG.  | 14. A SISTER'S LOVE. By W. HEIMBURG.                                  |
| 3. TWO DAUGHTERS OF ONE RACE. By W. HEIMBURG.  | 15. SHORT STORIES. By W. HEIMBURG.                                    |
| 4. LORA, the Major's Daughter. By W. HEIMBURG.   | 16. ADVENTURES ON THE MOSQUITO SHORE. By E. G. SQUIER.                |
| 5. WIVES OF MEN OF GENIUS. By ALPHONSE DAUDET.   | 17. A BRAVE WOMAN. By E. MARLITT.                                     |
| 6. HENRIETTE; or, A Corsican Mother. By FRANÇOIS COPPÉE.                                 | 18. THE RECTOR OF ST. LUKE'S. By MARIE BERNHARD.                      |
| 7. MAGDALEN'S FORTUNES. By W. HEIMBURG.  | 19. COLUMBIA: A Story of the Discovery of America. By JOHN R. MUSICK. |
| 8. THE PASTOR'S DAUGHTER. By W. HEIMBURG.  | 20. MISJUDGED. By W. HEIMBURG.  |
| 9. THE FEET OF LOVE. By ANNE REEVE ALDRICH.  | 21. A MAIDEN'S CHOICE. By W. HEIMBURG.                                |
| 10. BELLA'S BLUE BOOK.—The Story of an Ugly Woman. By MARIE CALM.                        | 22. LIGHT O' LOVE. By CLARA DUGAN MACLEAN.                            |
| 11. LUCIE'S MISTAKE. By W. HEIMBURG.   | 23. THE WILD ROSE OF GROßSTAUFFEN. By NATALY VON ESCHESTRUTH.         |
| 12. FLIRT. A Novel by PAUL HERVIEU. Illustrated with photogravures by MADELEINE LEMAIRE. | 24. CONSCIENCE. By HECTOR MALOT.                                      |
| 13. CHILDREN OF THE WORLD. By PAUL HEYSE.  | 25. THE HOUSEHOLD IDOL. By MARIE BERNHARD.                            |
|  | 26. A POOR GIRL. By W. HEIMBURG.                                      |

## The Rose Library.

Illustrated with Photogravures. 12mo, cloth, extra, \$1.00, or in illuminated paper cover, 50 cents each.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. CATHERINE'S COQUETRIES. By CAMILLE DEBANS. Translated by Leon Mead. | 8. JENNY'S ORDEAL. By LEON DE TINSEAU.                |
| 2. ASBEÏN. From the Life of a Virtuoso. By OSSIP SCHUBIN.              | 9. ASMODEUS; or, The Devil on Two Sticks. By LE SAGE. |
| 3. A RUSSIAN COUNTRY HOUSE. By CARL DETLEF.                            | 10. THE BACHELOR OF SALAMANCA. By LE SAGE.            |
| 4. ONE OF CLEOPATRA'S NIGHTS, and other Fantastic Romances.            | 11. THE MERRY BACHELOR. By LE SAGE.                   |
| 5. WAS IT LOVE. By PAUL BOURGET.                                       | 12. SOME CHILDREN OF ADAM. By R. M. MANLEY.           |
| 6. BORIS LENSKY. By OSSIP SCHUBIN.                                     | 13. FELIX LANZBERG'S EXPIATION. By OSSIP SCHUBIN.     |
| 7. HER PLAYTHINGS, MEN. By MABEL ESMONDE CAHILL.                       | 14. GIL BLAS. By LE SAGE.                             |

## The Fair Library.

A series of popular Novels. Edges cut, 12mo, paper, 25 cents.

1. LOVE KNOWS NO LAW. By LEON DE TINSEAU.

Worthington Co., 747 Broadway, New York.















**LIBRARY OF CONGRESS**



00021915324

